SCRUTINY

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WITH AN INDEX AND
RETROSPECT

VOLUME IX
1940–41

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SCRUTINY

A Quarterly Review

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SCRUTINY

A Quarterly Review

Edited by

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THE AMERICAN CULTURAL SCENE

(IV) THE NOVEL

I PROPOSE in this contribution to make a few observations about the contemporary American novel ; but I must disclaim at the outset any pretention of covering the subject. The production of fiction in America is a branch of big business which has developed to meet the demand of the largest reading public in the world ; and nobody but a professional reviewer could hope to achieve any adequate knowledge of the major trends and the more promising talents. The subject might be easier for the lay reader to handle if the main reviewing organs performed more adequately their function of guidance and discrimination ; but the process by which reputations are created is a very mysterious one, which appears to bear little relation to intrinsic merit. This article, therefore, will be concerned not with the most widely-read recent novels but only with those which, for one reason or another, this writer happens to have read.

In judging a novel there are two considerations which, at least for the present writer, are of primary importance. Literary value depends, in the first place, on the inherent quality of a writer's mind, as evidenced in the sincerity and freshness of his perceptions and his freedom from clichés. This quality reveals itself in the texture of a style, so that it is usually possible to recognize a writer of genuine talent by the reading of a single paragraph. Anybody whose style conveys this sense of original observation deserves to be read, no matter how many other deficiencies he may have. Writers, however, who have nothing but this inherent quality of perceptiveness finally disappoint their readers by their failure to develop. Continued growth requires a

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power to synthesize and evaluate experience—a power which is profoundly moral in the highest sense ; and as the faculty of perceptiveness reveals itself in style, so that of synthesis bears some relation to the novel's organic structure. To the extent that a novelist has mastered his experience, one might suggest, he will successfully perform his traditional function, that of exhibiting human character as it expresses itself in action and is itself modified by being acted upon. Failure to create complete and coherent characters and to present actions of human significance, on the other hand, would appear to indicate an incomplete moral understanding. Structural weaknesses in a novel, or the adoption of an artificial structure which is imposed upon the theme instead of developing out of it, are signs of fragmentary experience ; and writers whose experience remains fragmentary will, beyond a certain point, repeat themselves or disintegrate instead of continuing to develop.

Arrested development, as I have remarked on a previous occasion, is a striking characteristic of American literary careers ; among American novelists only Henry James grew into real maturity. Every half-dozen years produces a new crop of younger novelists, who disappear into obscurity before their work has fulfilled the hopes which it had originally encouraged. In 1920, for example, the accepted literary leaders were such writers as Winston Churchill and Joseph Hergesheimer, of whom the former is now totally, and the latter almost, forgotten. Within a few years the limelight was occupied by newcomers like Sinclair Lewis and Sherwood Anderson and by two older writers who were for the first time receiving full recognition, Theodore Dreiser and Willa Cather. In the later 'twenties appeared Ernest Hemingway and William Faulkner, whose best work was done before 1930, and John Dos Passos, who was to reach a zenith somewhat more slowly. In the 'thirties most of the major figures of the 'twenties were no longer discussed ; Dreiser published no novels after his *American Tragedy* ; Lewis, Anderson and Miss Cather continued to write, but their work deteriorated. Around 1933 there was a group of younger men who had written enough to be appraised and categorized—James T. Farrell, Robert Cantwell, Erskine Caldwell, and Edward Dahlberg, all of whom were politically of the Left ; there was also the isolated and meteoric figure of Thomas Wolfe. To-day Wolfe is dead, Dahlberg and Cantwell have published nothing for

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half a dozen years, Caldwell writes little, and only the work of Farrell has made any advance. Contrary to precedent, however, no promising younger generation has taken their places ; the past three or four years have been the emptiest period in the history of the American novel since before 1914. A few survivors from the past are still represented on publishers' lists, and a few figures have appeared who may prove to be important ; but there is no individual or group who can be regarded as exercising leadership.

Aesthetic disintegration, I have suggested, should probably be regarded as a symptom of moral confusion ; but the causes for it are usually to be found in society rather than in the individual. Experience remains fragmentary because there is no established social structure or accepted code of manners or generally-held body of moral beliefs which might serve as a standard for emotional integration and as a point of reference for the measurement of individual deviations. In Europe, as a result of a similar situation, the best twentieth-century writing has been concerned with moral exploration ; but this tendency has been relatively absent from American fiction. The only American novelists who can be regarded as having been engaged in a search for salvation are Sherwood Anderson and Waldo Frank ; and neither of them is comparable in importance to such figures as Gide and Mann and D. H. Lawrence. The main tendency in American fiction has been sociological ; it has been concerned with broad social forces, and with individuals only to the extent that they illustrate those forces. And although it has usually condemned modern society, it has either failed to define the values in terms of which the condemnation is made, as in the novels of Dreiser and Sinclair Lewis, or has adopted as its only reference point the hope of a proletarian revolution. The inadequacy of the sociological approach, however, is that it necessarily excludes large areas of human experience. Marxism offers only an incomplete technique for moral integration because there are numerous experiences which it does not interpret or evaluate. And while the Marxist viewpoint achieves an appearance of integration only by omission, those writers who have not succumbed to Marxism and have presented a wider experience have been able to express it only as fragmentary and chaotic.

Of those novels written during the 'thirties which seem most likely to be remembered, the majority can be classified as socio-

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logical. One might mention, for example, the studies of the Jewish life of the New York slums in the novels of Daniel Fuchs, in Henry Roth's *Call It Sleep*, and in Edward Dahlberg's *From Flushing to Calvary*, in all of which the exceedingly sordid details of slum existence were brought into more vivid relief by the introduction of poetic overtones ; or Grace Lumpkin's description of southern mountaineers sucked into the factory system in *To Make My Bread* ; or Erskine Caldwell's fantasies on the sub-human lives of southern tenant farmers ; or two novels about Adirondack farmers by John Sanford, *The Old Man's Place* and *Seventy Times Seven*, both of which were written in a remarkably forceful, pungent and clear-cut prose, and the second of which was broadened, by an interesting use of symbols, into a commentary on American civilization as a whole. The only sociological novelists whose work has bulk as well as quality, however, are John Dos Passos and James T. Farrell ; and it is no accident that these were among the first Left-wing writers to repudiate the Communist Party. The paralysing effects of Communist tactics on literature are illustrated by the well-known case of one of the best of the younger novelists, who has been trying for six years to complete a book about the San Francisco general strike and who has been compelled to change his approach almost every year as a result of changes in the line of the party. Both Dos Passos and Farrell have been praised in the pages of *Scrutiny*: and both of them have virtues which are rare in the contemporary literature of Great Britain. On the American side of the Atlantic, however, their weaknesses become, perhaps, more conspicuous. Dos Passos's panoramic survey of American capitalist society is probably the biggest literary achievement of the 'thirties. It has, however, the deficiencies which are inherent in its method of approach. Its characters are two-dimensional, and few of them have experiences much above a physiological level ; instead of growing they merely repeat themselves ; and what happens to them is significant only by what it reveals of the society to which they belong. Since his trilogy Dos Passos has published only *The Adventures of a Young Man*, an attack on the Communist Party which is permeated with an extraordinary bitterness and which, though politically interesting, marks no literary advance. Farrell, a younger Dreiser, is a photographic realist whose chief gift is an accurate ear for American speech but

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who displays little sensitivity to subtleties of style and structure. After reading his Studs Lonigan trilogy one knew a certain segment of Chicago Irish society down to the minutest detail ; but though the trilogy was superb reportage, it was scarcely art. There was no conflict in it, since the protagonist was plainly doomed from the outset. Farrell's Danny O'Neill series, of which two volumes have appeared, *A World I Never Made* and *No Star is Lost*, is a more important work in that its scope is considerably broader and its characterization more varied ; but it displays the same defects.

The alternative to the sociological approach has been, in most cases, a rendering of experience without making any attempt to integrate or interpret it ; and if the one method results, after a certain level of technical proficiency has been reached, only in repetitiveness, the other leads to disintegration. One might, perhaps, cite in corroboration the case of Ernest Hemingway, who achieved success in his earlier books by the device of deliberately restricting himself to the simplest and most physiological of emotions but whose last novel, *To Have And Have Not*, was incoherent. Since, however, Hemingway's most recent short stories are among his best, it would be premature to dismiss him. A better example would be William Faulkner, who has, by the quality of his perceptiveness, a profoundly original talent but who never had a point of view, and whose stylistic tricks and preoccupation with meaningless acts of violence have, in his more recent books, become exaggerated to the point of absurdity. One could refer also to Thomas Wolfe's long autobiography, a kind of *Portrait of the Artist* rewritten in terms of Whitman's America, which had an undeniable power but which was merely a string of episodes without a theme, having no development or interpretation. A younger writer of a comparable kind is Frederick Prokosch, who last book, *Night of the Poor*, has attracted some critical attention. *Night of the Poor*, like the same author's *Asiatics*, describes a journey, in this case across the United States ; and the protagonist undergoes a series of queer, dreamlike and often macabre experiences, which are described with considerable sensitivity but which do not lead anywhere or point to anything.

From such books it is often a relief to turn to avowedly commercial writers whose work is wholly derivative but who do, at least, write novels which have a structure, a theme, and a point of view.

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Louis Bromfield—to cite one example—could scarcely be called a writer of importance. His treatment of his characters is sentimental; and his attitude could best be described as a vulgarized version of that of Henry James, his favourite theme being the contrast of European sophistication with American middle-class solidity. But the technical virtuosity displayed in the construction of his novels makes one acutely aware of the absence of this quality in the work of writers who have more serious æsthetic pretentions.

From this point of view I wish to recommend two recent first novels by Southerners, Allen Tate's *The Fathers* and Robert Penn Warren's *Night Rider*, which, though inferior in some respects to some of the books which I have already mentioned, exhibit a much greater degree of integration. Each of them expresses a coherent moral attitude, which can admit nuances of individual emotion as well as broad social forces ; and each of them has, in consequence, coherence of structure and theme, of a kind which has been lacking in most other novels of the 'twenties and 'thirties.

Of the two books *The Fathers* is in some ways a finer work. The texture of the style is much denser ; the perceptiveness displayed in it is more subtle and more complex. But it is the work of a man who is primarily a poet and who continues to write metaphysical poetry when he turns to prose fiction. The novel, placed in Virginia at the outbreak of the Civil War, describes the disintegration of a Southern family living in accordance with its traditional ways under the impact of a young man whose violent and undirected energies and refusal to conform to the accepted norms of human conduct typify the newer forces in American industrial society. The weakness of *The Fathers*, as a novel, is that its elaborate philosophical and political overtones are a heavier weight than its structure of action and character can successfully carry. The fusion of symbol and fact is incomplete ; and the actions of the protagonist, intelligible as long as they are interpreted symbolically, are not equally comprehensible in terms of individual character.

Night Rider, on the other hand, seems to me to come closer to what a good novel ought to be than any other book written by an American for a long time. It deals with an episode known as the Tobacco War which occurred in Kentucky early in this century. The tobacco farmers, exploited by the buyers' monopoly,

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formed an association in order to demand better prices ; and this association was gradually compelled to employ intimidation, arson and murder against those farmers who refused to join it. The central figure in the novel is a young lawyer who is drawn into the association by personal weaknesses rather than by his convictions and whose character gradually disintegrates under the strain of the terroristic activities in which he participates. The novel is notable, among other virtues, because of its author's exuberant pleasure in simple sensuous experiences—which has reminded some reviewers, with good reason, of Tolstoi—and because of his power to convey a man's personality through the quality of his speech. Mr. Warren's performance is not everywhere equal to his intentions. The revelation of character through action, and the analysis of the process of moral decay, are not always successful. The protagonist has a love affair which is supposed to mark a stage in his disintegration, but this is told, rather than shown, to us ; and the final scene, in which he is killed after attempting murder in order to satisfy a private grudge, appears to have been included only in order to bring the novel to some kind of conclusion. Mr. Warren has, however, the gifts of a born novelist ; and *Night Rider* is the kind of book which novelists ought to write if they are to develop into major talents. It is, moreover, refreshing to find a book about rural and small-town Americans in which the characters are human beings and not sub-human half-wits and perverts. Mr. Warren, one might also point out, has accomplished what the Marxist critics have demanded that novelists should do but what no American Marxist novelist has done with comparable success ; he has written a novel about a politico-economic conflict in which sympathies are enlisted on the side of the under-privileged.

H. B. PARKES.

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'AS YOU LIKE IT'[1]

IT is a commonplace that Jaques and Hamlet are akin. But it is also a commonplace that Jaques is an intruder into *As You Like It*, so that in spite of the kinship the plays are not usually held to have much connection. I have begun to doubt whether not only *As You Like It* and *Hamlet*, but almost all the comedies and the tragedies as a whole are not closely connected, and in a way which may be quite important.

Recent criticism of Shakespeare has directed itself with profit upon the tragedies, the 'problem plays' and certain of the histories. The early comedies, on the other hand, have either been disparaged or entirely overlooked. Yet the same criticism owes part of its success to a notion of what it calls Shakespeare's 'integrity;' his manifold interests, it has maintained, being co-ordinated so as rarely to thwart, regularly to strengthen one another. Hence he was alert and active as few have been, while his writing commanded not part but the whole of his resources.

Such a notion seems sound and proves useful. Belief in an author's integrity, however, ought to forbid the dismissal of any part of his work, at least its hasty dismissal. The comedies, to which he gave a number of years of his life, are no insignificant part of Shakespeare's. If it is true that they shed no light on the tragedies nor the tragedies on them, it would seem he deserves credit for a unique dissipation rather than concentration of his powers.

It is of course comprehensible that the comedies should be shunned. To some readers they are less inviting than the tragedies, to all they are more wearisome when their study is begun. Not only are the texts in a state of comparative impurity, the form itself is impure. Being less serious than tragedy—this I am aware is disputed, but would suggest that the word has a number of meanings—being less serious than tragedy, comedy admits of interludes and sideshows; further, the material for the sideshows is not infrequently such that it might be material for the comedy

[1]The substance of a paper read to the Cambridge English Club.

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itself. Decision is important but not always easy whether or not it should be disregarded.

The desultory nature of the following notes may, I hope, be forgiven, partly because of complications such as these, partly because of contemporary distractions which leave no time for elaboration. I start with Jaques's melancholy, in respect of which alone he has been likened to Hamlet.

It is, I think, most accessible to study in his encounter with Rosalind at the beginning of Act IV. Having abundant leisure he needs a companion to while it away. 'I prethee, pretty youth,' he says, 'let me be better acquainted with thee.' But Rosalind, who has heard unfavourable reports, is by no means eager to comply: 'They say you are a melancholy fellow.' As for that, replies Jaques, his melancholy is at least sincere, for it is as pleasing to him as jollity to other men: 'I doe love it better then laughing.' But sincerity is irrelevant unless to deepen his offence. As there is an excess of laughter so there is of sadness which should not be pleasing to anybody:

> 'Those that are in extremity of either, are abhominable fellowes, and betray themselves to every moderne censure, worse then drunkards.'

The rebuke is no more than a rebuke of common sense. Your melancholy, objects Rosalind, is not justifiable merely because it is your melancholy, for it may be one of the things which, though they exist, ought not to do so. But the rebuke is none the less pertinent, common sense implying a minimum of alertness and Jaques being afflicted with languor. Either as cause or as consequence of his state he is blind and fails to see, or is stupid and fails to ponder obvious truths.

The force of the rebuke is to be noticed. From Shakespeare, mediæval rather than modern in this as other matters, drunkards receive no more than temporary tolerance: Falstaff is in the end cast off, Sir Toby beat about the coxcomb. And the respect which they receive is not even temporary. Wine and wassail make

> . . . Memorie, the Warder of the Braine
> . . . a Fume, and the Receit of Reason
> A Lymbeck only;

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the sleep they produce is 'swinish,' by them nature is 'drenched.' A drunkard as such forfeits not only his manhood but his humanity. Nor does Rosalind's 'modern' mean what the word does now, 'modish' or what has been invented of late. Rather it is that which has always been the mode, and which stands plain to reason so that there never was need to invent it. In this play for example the justice is described as

Full of wise sawes and moderne instances

—of instances which belong to proverbial wisdom, apt and sound so that they have become trite. What Rosalind is saying is that Jaques by his melancholy is turned into a beast, and that an old woman would be less ignorant, less pitiable than he.

Taken aback, for the moment he can think of nothing but to re-affirm his liking: 'Why, 'tis good to be sad and say nothing.' Crudely however, so that he lays himself open to the crude retort: 'Why then, 'tis good to be a poste.' And it would seem to be this which finally rouses him to a defence.

His melancholy, he begins, is not like others Rosalind has heard of:

> 'I have neither the Schollers melancholy, which is emulation: nor the Musitians, which is fantasticall; nor the Courtiers, which is proud; nor the Souldiers, which is ambitious . . .'

and so on. Jaques's melancholy has its source not in private hopes, anxieties and disappointments but in what is of wider importance as it is in the world outside. 'It is a melancholy,' he continues, 'of mine owne'—one that is which he is the first to discover—'compounded of many simples, extracted from many objects.' Or in other words it is 'the sundrie contemplation of my travells, in which (m)y often rumination wraps me in a most humorous sadnesse.'

Jaques's meaning may not be quite clear, and I do not think it is or can be, but his intention would seem to be so. By boasting of originality, breadth and freshness of information he hopes to impress, perhaps to intimidate, the youthful Rosalind. But she mistakes, and I suspect purposely, his drift: as she is intelligent

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enough to distrust originality, she is subtle enough to challenge it in this way. Seizing on the word ' travels ' she exclaims:

> 'A traveller: by my faith you have great reason to be sad ; I feare you have sold your owne lands, to see other mens ; then to have seene much, and to have nothing, is to have rich eyes and poore hands.

She ventures after all, that is, to assimilate his melancholy to other people's, suggesting that it may be due to poverty, which is a private anxiety. But Jaques rejects with scorn the notion that his travels have on a balance brought him anything but profit: ' I have gain'd,' he insists, ' my experience.' Once more he is implying that something, because it exists, has a title to do so ; that his experience, as it has been gained, was necessarily worth the gaining. Once more therefore, and if possible more vigorously this time, she appeals to common sense for his condemnation. Whatever profit he imagines he has brought back from his travels, there is something which the merest stay-at-home could tell him is a loss:

> *Jaques :* I have gain'd my experience.
> *Rosalind :* And your experience makes you sad: I had rather have a foole to make me merrie, then experience to make me sad, and to travaile for it too.

Whether or not Rosalind is aware of it, this second rebuke is of peculiar force as addressed to Jaques. Of all the characters it is he alone who, in previous scenes, has expressed complete satisfaction in the company of Touchstone, the fool. He has gone even further, and claimed that nowhere but in folly ought satisfaction to be found:

> . . . Oh noble foole,
> A worthy foole: Motley's the onely weare . . .
> . . . O that I were a foole,
> I am ambitious for a motley coat.

Yet now he has to be reminded that there is an office which fools can perform. About his conduct it seems there is a grave inconsistency, for at one time he countenances factitious gaiety, at another equally factitious gloom.

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If it stood alone, such an inconsistency might be puzzling ; but it has a companion, which also serves to explain it. In claiming in his interchange with Rosalind that all experience is worth while, Jaques is claiming in effect that no experience is worth anything at all. In asserting that, in the present, there are no reasons why he should do one thing rather than another—why, for example, he should be merry rather than mope—he is shutting his eyes to reasons why, in the future, one thing rather than another should be done. In other words he is posing as a sceptic, and scepticism is an inconsistent doctrine. Though a belief itself, it denies the possibility of belief ; it denies to man the possibility of action, though by his nature he cannot refrain from acting. And it is because Jaques, in his more alert moments, is aware of this second inconsistency that he commits the first. He seeks shelter in the motley to persuade himself that though he acts and cannot help doing so, he nevertheless does nothing. For if his actions are mere folly they are of no account, and as good as nothing at all.

It is however only at rare moments, as for example when stirred by a first meeting with Touchstone, that Jaques is alert. For the greater part of his time he is characterized by the languor already referred to : which keeps him from making sustained efforts, even that which (as he is not wholly unintelligent) being a fool requires. Instead of concerning himself to justify his scepticism, he quietly submits to it ; and his submission is his melancholy, his 'sadness.' A man in whose eyes the world contains nothing of value, cannot be spurred to action either by the sight of objects he wishes to obtain, or by the thought of ideals he hopes to realize. The only action open to him—and as he is human, he cannot remain wholly inert—no more than half deserves the name, for in it he is as much passive as active. He needs, so to speak, to be betrayed into action—to be propelled into it from behind, by agencies of which he is not completely aware. Such agencies are the mechanism of habit, or a conspiracy of circumstance. In comedy where characters are not relentlessly harassed by circumstance, they are able continually to yield to habit.

The travels to which Jaques refers the origin of his scepticism are equally likely to have been its consequence, for travel and exploration degenerate into habit. When the senses are dazzled by a ceaseless and rapid change of objects, the intellect has no

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time to discriminate between them, the will no occasion for choice, so that in the end a man becomes capable of neither. The habit is then a necessity to life, which at the same time and to the same extent has slackened, become languid. It concerns itself only with the surface of objects while their substance is neglected. Jaques's decision in Act V proceeds from a habit of this kind:

> The Duke hath put on a Religious life . . .
> To him will I.

His pretext is that

> . . . out of these convertites
> There is much matter to be heard, and learn'd.

But his reason, rather than to learn, is to avoid learning. He quits the court for the monastery much as amateur students, threatened with the labour of mastering a subject, abandon it for the preliminaries of another—usually as different as possible. If during the course of the play Jaques does not engage on travel, it should be remembered that he frequently changes, not his surroundings, but his interlocutor. He indulges the habit of gossip, which is that of a traveller immobilized. That he has abundant leisure for gossip is only natural: time hangs heavy on a sceptic's hands, for whom the world contains nothing that can take it off.

It hangs heavy on Hamlet's, and this is the most obvious point of resemblance between him and Jaques. ' I have of late,' Hamlet complains, ' lost all my mirth, forgone all custome of exercise ; ' and he goes on to give general reasons. They imply scepticism of a kind: the earth and sky, he says, seem but a ' foule and pestilent congregation of vapours,' such as do not encourage enterprise: man himself has come to appear but the ' Quintessence of dust,' with whom he would not willingly have commerce. In the same way, to refer to another tragedy, time hangs heavy on Macbeth's hands, at least as he draws near his end. Neither sight nor sound can rouse his interest, nor could it be roused by any conceivable sight or sound. He finds himself incapable of believing in the reality even of his wife's death: the report of it, he suggests, should be kept from him until tomorrow. But at the same time he knows that tomorrow will find him as insensible, as incredulous as today.

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Scepticism of a kind: but it is immediately obvious that Hamlet speaks with a disgust or an impatience, Macbeth with a weariness which to Jaques are unknown. Even in this matter in which alone they are similar, their dissimilarity is yet greater. Anticipating a little, it might be said that Macbeth and Hamlet lead a fuller, a more complete life than Jaques; they are, that is, more conscious of themselves, and rather than languid are continuously, perhaps, feverishly alert.

One consequence is that they cannot easily be betrayed into action. Whereas Jaques looks back without regret, even with complacency on his travels, it is only with reluctance that Macbeth lapses into the habit of fighting for fighting's sake:

> Why should I play the Roman Foole, and dye
> On mine owne sword? whiles I see lives, the gashes
> Do better upon them.

Sentiment and rhythm are flat to extinction, Macbeth is speaking sullenly. What he is about to do may be better than nothing, it is all he can do; nevertheless it is no more than might be done by a common bully, by an animal. For them it might be a full life; for himself, Macbeth admits, it can be no more than the slackened half-life of habit. Similarly the 'custome of exercise' and all custome have lost their hold on Hamlet; for him to act he needs to be surprised by extraordinary circumstance.

Nevertheless, as has been said, neither he nor Macbeth is idle. The energy which their state of mind forbids they should employ on the world, they employ on the state of mind itself; so that not only the inconsistency, the evil (what Rosalind meant by the 'beastliness') of scepticism is continually before them. They see it is not the solution to a problem, but rather a problem which presses to be solved; not the tempering of feeling and the invigoration of thought, but the denial of both. They not only reject Jaques's flight into folly, which was to preserve scepticism; they agonize over the sort of reflections with which, in both languid and alert moments, Jaques is lulled. 'And all our yesterdayes,' exclaims Macbeth in despair at what forces itself upon him as the nothingness of man,

> And all our yesterdayes have lighted Fooles
> The way to dusty death;

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' 'tis but an hour agoe,' observes Jaques with satisfaction,

> 'Tis but an hour agoe, since it was nine,
> And after one houre more, 'twill be eleven,
> And so from houre to houre, we ripe, and ripe,
> And then from houre to houre, we rot, and rot . . .

or rather Touchstone observes this, from whom Jaques is quoting. Touchstone is by profession and conviction a fool, the seriousness of whose statements will come up for consideration later ; Jacques is as little serious as, in a quotation, it is possible to be. He is echoing more sound than sense ; the latter he has not plumbed (the movement, the rhythm show it), and the statement he has made no more than half his own—fitting accompaniment and expression of a half-life of habit. Elsewhere he compares human life to a theatrical performance as though, in harmony with his scepticism, to stress its unreality ; but very soon, in harmony with his languor, the theatre begins to appear a substantial, for all he cares, a permanent structure. Performances in it last a long time, so that it is possible to make a full display of talent:

> . . . one man in his time playes many parts,
> His Acts being seven ages.

And then Jaques recites the ages, diverting himself with objects separated on this occasion not in space but in time. When the same comparison occurs to Macbeth he is so overwhelmed with the notion of unreality that he does not allow even the actor to act: the latter ' struts and frets . . . upon the Stage,' struts and frets not for a full performance but only for ' his houre . . . and then is heard no more.' In Macbeth's verse the comparison flares up and extinguishes itself in indignation at what it implies of man's lot:

> . . . It is a Tale
> Told by an Ideot, full of sound and fury
> Signifying nothing.

That of Jaques continues to demean itself elegantly even when describing in detail man's end

> Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.

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Once again the rhythm and the movement show that Jaques is meaning little of what he says ; that a true traveller once more, he is occupied with the surface only, not the substance of objects before him.

If I may look aside or ahead for a moment, I would venture to suggest that the essential difference between comedy and tragedy may perhaps be this sort of difference: not one of kind, I mean, but of degree. As far as I can see it is possible and even probable that tragedy and comedy—Shakespearean comedy at any rate—treat of the same problems, comedy doing so (to repeat the word) less seriously. And by 'less seriously,' I may now explain, I mean that the problems are not forced to an issue: a lucky happening, a lucky trait of character (or what for the purposes of the play appears lucky) allowing them to be evaded. As, for example, conditions in Arden and conditions of his own temper preserve Jaques from fully realizing the nature and consequences of his scepticism: to Rosalind, to the reader it is obvious that his interests are restricted, his vigour lessened, but he is never put to the test. Hamlet, on the other hand, in a similar spiritual state, is called upon to avenge a father, foil an uncle and govern a kingdom. And when at last chance forces him into action it is not only that he may slaughter but also that he may be slaughtered: in other words, not that in spite of his disability he may achieve his end, but that because of it he may fail. In *Othello* hardly an accident happens which does not lend plausibility to Iago's deceit, so that the problem posed by human malice on the one hand, human ignorance on the other, cannot but be faced ; in *Much Ado* there is a final accident—and a very obvious one, for its name is Dogberry—which unmasks Don John. In *Lear* accident of the wildest form unites with malice and with the elements to convince a human being of his imbecility ; in *The Winter's Tale* accident equally wild serves to hide that imbecility, if not from Leontes (who is however encouraged to forget it) at least from Florizel. In comedy the materials for tragedy are procured, in some cases heaped up ; but they are not, so to speak, attended to, certainly not closely examined. And so what might have caused grief causes only a smile, or at worst a grimace.

I apologize for speculations of this kind, which can only remain gratuitous until it is known more exactly what comedy,

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more especially what *As You Like It*, is about. At least one other resemblance, possibly an important one, between it and the tragedies, calls, I think, for attention. As Hamlet's melancholy is caused by the sin of others and Macbeth's by sin of his own, so Jaques—if the Duke is to be trusted—has not only travelled but been

> . . . a Libertine,
> As sensuall as the brutish sting itself.

And the cure for all three, according to each of the three plays, is very much the same. Fortinbras reproaches Hamlet, and Hamlet reproaches himself, with lacking a 'hue of resolution' which, as it is 'native,' it is a defect he should not possess; Macbeth contrasts the division of counsels within him, suspending activity, with the strong monarchy or 'single state' enjoyed in the healthy man by the reason. Similarly Rosalind confronts Jaques with the desirability of what she calls merriment or mirth: from her remark already quoted it is obvious she does not mean laughter, not at any rate laughter without measure, and therefore not laughter in the first place. For the confusion of Jaques it is necessary she should speak emphatically, in a conversation which irks her she is to be excused if she is brief. Were the occasion other, or were she given to reflection, she might perhaps describe this 'mirth' more closely—as something similar to her own 'alertness' which has already drawn attention: the pre-requisite of common sense, and what in more recent times, according to the sympathies and perspicacity of the speaker, has been known either as 'vitality' or 'faith.' The meaning of 'mirth' in fifteenth and sixteenth century devotional books should be borne in mind, and its meaning on the lips of, say, St. Thomas More. Hamlet, it will be remembered, noted as first among his distressing symptoms that he had 'lost all his mirth.'

This scene at the beginning of Act IV sheds light, I do not think it would be too much to claim, on all that Jaques says or does. If so it is important to a not inconsiderable part of the play, and in that at least Jaques cannot be an intruder. For his quips and monologues, however loose in their immediate context, have a dependence on this dialogue to which he is indispensable. He is so not only by what he says, but also by what he causes to

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be said to him. I am going to suggest that, in spite of the familiar verdict, he is no more of an intruder anywhere. For the rest of the play consists largely of situations which, if he is taken as primary melancholic, might be described as modelled on that in which he finds himself with Rosalind. Either she or a temporary ally or deputy of hers—frequently Corin the Old Shepherd—faces and condemns a succession of characters who, like Jaques, are incapable of or indisposed to action. Silvius, Touchstone, Orlando, the Duke, each has a melancholy of his own ; and so too has Rosalind, in so far as she is in love with Orlando. But not even that escapes her judgment, since she can judge it disguised as someone other than herself. Add that the minor characters occasionally condemn or at least reprove one another, and it is possible to gain some notion of the pattern which Shakespeare seems to have intended for *As You Like It*. A single *motif* is repeated, giving unity to the whole ; but at the same time it varies continually, so that the whole is complex.

Such I think was Shakespeare's intended pattern: unfortunately it has been either obscured by revision, or incomplete revision has failed to impress it clearly on the play. The theory of the New Cambridge editors must no doubt be accepted, that there are at least two strata of text, an early and a late. This is a difficulty of the kind referred to, that a student must expect from textual impurities in a comedy. But certain portions of the pattern are sufficiently clear to give, to a careful reader, some idea of the whole.

Take for example the relations obtaining between the Old Shepherd on the one hand, and Jaques and Touchstone on the other. The latter has been much sentimentalized, partly because of his wits, partly because of a supposed loyalty to Celia. But his wit has been treated as though it were a mere interlude, a diversion for the reader as well as for the Duke ; whereas little else would seem more closely knit into the play. And as will be suggested, this is the reverse of sentimental. As for Touchstone's loyalty, it would seem to be mentioned only in Celia's line,

> He'll go along o'er the wide world with mee.

It may have had importance in an earlier version, but in that which has survived Shakespeare is no more concerned with how

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the characters arrive in Arden—whether under Touchstone's convoy or not—than how they are extricated from it. Touchstone's loyalty is about as interesting to him, and should be as interesting to the reader, as Oliver's green and gold snake.

What is interesting is a disingenuous reply which Touchstone gives to the question: 'And how like you this shepherds life?' He pretends to make distinctions where it is impossible there should be any:

> 'Truely . . . in respect of it selfe, it is a good life ; but in respect that it is a shepheards life, it is naught. In respect that it is solitary, I like it verie well: but in respect that it is private, it is a very vild life . . . '

A shepherd's life, no more than other things, can be distinguished from itself, nor can what is solitary be other than private. What Touchstone is saying is that he neither likes nor dislikes the shepherd's life, while at the same time he does both ; or in other words, that towards the shepherd's life he has no feelings whatever. And in truth towards all things if not quite all, Touchstone is as apathetic as Jaques. He too has his melancholy, as has been said: and naturally resembling Jaques more than Hamlet or Macbeth, he too accepts distraction from a habit. It is not the ceaseless search for novelty or gossip, but what he calls 'philosophy' or the barren intercourse of a mind with itself. He multiplies distinctions like the above, or pursues similarities based solely on sound or letter, neglecting the meaning of a word. The result is scepticism in a very practical sense, such as unchecked would destroy language and all possibility of thought. Even the old Shepherd is not slow to realize this, for his sole reply to the blunt question, 'Has't any Philosophie in thee . . . ?' is to recite a number of obvious truths:

> 'I know the more one sickens, the worse at ease he is: and that hee that wants money, meanes, and content, is without three good friends. That the propertie of raine is to wet, and fire to burne'

and so on. However obvious, they are at least truths, at least significant ; and he concludes:

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'hee that hath learned no wit by Nature, nor Art, may complaine of dull breeding, or comes of a very dull kindred.'

In other words: he who cannot behave in a more responsible way than Touchstone is an idiot. But 'idiot is what I mean by a philosopher'—

Such a one is a naturall philosopher

rejoins Touchstone, indifferent enough to his diversion not to claim that it is more than it is.

He proceeds to indulge in it at length. The Shepherd he says is damned because he has not been to Court, Court manners being good and what is not good being wicked. Too patiently the Shepherd replies with a distinction which, as it is he and not Touchstone makes it, is of primary importance:

'those that are good manners at the Court, are as ridiculous in the Countrey, as the behaviour of the Countrie is most mockeable at the Court.'

But this is brushed aside, and Touchstone emphasizes his perversity by changing the order in which court and country are ranked. Henceforward, he decrees, they shall be on a level, or rather the court shall be the more wicked. In despair the Shepherd retires from a conversation in which words, as they have so variable a meaning, have as good as no meaning at all:

'You have too Courtly a wit, for mee, Ile rest.'

Had he said 'too philosophical a wit' his point might have been more immediately clear; but for him no doubt as for Touchstone, court and 'philosophy' are closely allied.

To justify himself he adds the following description:

'Sir, I am a true Labourer, I earne that I eate: get that I weare; owe no man hate, envie no mans happinesse; glad of other mens good (,) content with my harme: and the greatest of my pride, is to see my Ewes graze, and my Lambes sucke.'

Of himself, that is, he claims to go about his own affairs, and to go about them with the mirth or minimum of serenity demanded by Rosalind. He has no need of 'incision'—whatever that may mean—or of any other remedy to conduct himself like an adult

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being ; whereas Touchstone who suggests the remedy has at the moment no affairs, appears to be able to conceive of no affairs to go about at all.

For Shepherd and audience the conversation is over. To them it seems that Touchstone is defeated beyond recovery ; not however to Touchstone himself. He insists on adding a last word, and in doing so hints at one of the things to which he is not yet wholly indifferent, in respect of which therefore he parts company with Jaques. Mention of ewes and sucking lambs spurs him on to the following :

> ' That is another simple sinne in you, to bring the Ewes and the Rammes together, and to offer to get our living by the copulation of Cattle, to be bawd to a Belwether, and to betray a shee-Lambe of a twelvemonth to a crooked-pated olde Cuckodly Ramme, out of all reasonable match. If thou bee'st not damn'd for this, the divell himselfe will have no shepherds, I cannot see how else thou shouldst escape.'

About this there are two things to be noticed : first that it is nasty, and secondly that it is the nastier because it falls outside the conversation. Touchstone is no longer endeavouring to prove anything about country and court, whether sound or fantastic : he assimilates the sexual life of men to that of beasts solely because it seems of itself worth while to do so. Yet this should not cause surprise : if in this passage he appears to exalt the latter, elsewhere in deeds as well as words he is diligent to degrade the former.

Upon their first arrival in Arden, when he and Rosalind overhear Silvius's complaint, Rosalind sighs :

> *Jove, Jove,* this Shepherds passion
> Is much upon my fashion.

'And mine,' exclaims Touchstone, adding however immediately, ' but it growes somewhat stale with mee.' That is, he is impatient of the elaborations and accretions received by the sexual desire, when a persistent subject in an otherwise healthy mind. His next appearance is as the wooer of Audrey, a country wench who thanks the gods that she is ' foul,' and whom no elaborations have been necessary to win. Her desire to be a ' woman of the world,' in

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other words a married woman, is ingenuous and no more a secret from Touchstone than from anyone else.

It is by no means to her discredit, nor would it be to Touchstone's if gratifying her desire, he thereby eased his own and was thankful. But the opposite is true. He is neither eased, nor does he spare an occasion, public or private, of pouring ridicule on the ingenuousness of which he has taken advantage. It is as though, aware that he can no longer hope for desire to be restrained, he sought to humiliate it with the least attractive object; then proceeded to revenge himself upon the object for his own lack of restraint. Audrey protests that she is 'honest' or chaste; but that, he answers, has had no share in drawing his attentions:

Audrey: Would you not have me honest?
Touchst.: No truly, unlesse thou wert hard favour'd . . .
Audrey: Well, I am not faire, and therefore I pray the Gods make me honest.
Touchst.: Truly, to cast away honesty upon a foule slut, were to put good meate in an uncleane dish . . . But be it, as it may bee, I wil marrie thee . . .

To a large extent this conversation, like most of Touchstone's, is mere playing with words; but in so far as it has any meaning, it is that the word 'honesty' deserves only to be played with. And when at last he brings himself to mention honesty with an air of seriousness, it is not that she but that he himself may be praised:

'a poore virgin sir, an il-favor'd thing sir, but mine owne, a poore humour of mine sir, to take that that no man else will: rich honestie dwels like a miser sir, in a poore house, as your Pearle in your foule oyster.'

He is presenting her to the Duke as his intended: and since her exterior has nothing to explain his choice, hints that an explanation is to be found within. That is, he is claiming for himself the credit due to perspicacity.

Unfortunately he puts forward at the same time a claim to modesty, thus showing with how little seriousness he is continuing to speak. Did he value honesty at all, he would not represent the choice of it as a sacrifice; nor would he describe Audrey its exemplar as a 'poor thing.' His modesty, it should further be

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noticed, itself suggests confusion or deceit, for not only does it permit of advertisement, it is advertised not at Touchstone's expense but at someone else's. He does not in one respect decry himself so that he may be exalted in another ; rather in order to exalt himself he decries his future wife. The first would in any case be tiresome, as is all inverted vanity ; but the second, as a hypocritical form of selfishness, is contemptible.

Given that Touchstone is a man of sense, a performance like this can be due only to his attempting two things at once, and two things not very compatible one with another. As usual he is seeking to ridicule Audrey ; but at the same time, I think, to recommend himself to the Duke. While sharing all Jaques's objections to purposeful activity he is without Jaques's income: he must provide himself with a living or must starve. And scepticism and melancholy being essentially unnatural, no one starves for their sake. At Touchstone's entry on the stage it was hinted that the Duke might be willing to appoint a jester:

> ' Good my Lord, bid him welcome: This is the Motley-minded Gentleman, that I have so often met in the Forrest: he hath bin a Courtier he sweares . . . Good my Lord, like this fellow.'

And the Duke is well known to be, in Jaques's word, ' disputatious.' It is solely to please him that Touchstone, among his other pre-occupations, does what he can to handle the notions ' honesty ' and ' modesty ' ; were he speaking to a crony or to himself they would not enter his head, no more than the Euphuistic apologue about oysters with which he ends.

A similar reason is to be advanced for his string of Court witticisms which follow, about the causes of a quarrel and the degrees of a lie. So long as to be tiresome, the modern reader is tempted to dismiss it as an interlude ; it is not however wholly without dramatic excuse. At the stage reached by his candidature, Touchstone thinks it proper to give an exhibition of professional skill. And that too he makes subserve his sexual passion: having drawn all eyes to himself, for a moment he directs them to Audrey:

> ' Upon a lye, seven times removed: (beare your bodie more seeming Audrey) . . .

and so she is ridiculed once more.

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It seems likely he obtains his appointment: at any rate he makes the impression he desires. 'He is very swift and sententious,' says the Duke,

> 'he uses his folly like a stalking-horse, and under the presentation of that he shoots his wit.'

Which of course is just what the real Touchstone never does, in spite of what the critics say. The judgment of the Old Shepherd is sounder, that Touchstone's folly has no purpose at all, or if any, only that of discrediting and ruining purpose. And so is Jaques sounder, when he recognizes in Touchstone's folly the cover for his scepticism.

It is interesting, and significant of the subtle pattern which Shakespeare intends to weave—a pattern not only of intrigue but of ideas—that the Duke who is thus easily gulled when Touchstone assumes a virtue, protests immediately when required to accept as a virtue Touchstone's vice. Jaques describes to him, and asks for himself, the liberty of railing which Touchstone enjoys:

> . . . weed your better judgements
> Of all opinion that grows ranke in them,
> That I am wise. I must have liberty
> Withall, as large a Charter as the winde,
> To blow on whom I please, for so fooles have . . .
> Invest me in my motley: Give me leave
> To speake my mind.

Such impunity, the Duke sees, can have no results of the kind Jaques promises:

> . . . I will through and through
> Cleanse the foule bodie of th' infected world . . .

but only evil for himself and others:

> Fie on thee. I can tell what thou wouldst do . . .
> Most mischeevous foule sin.

And he proceeds to diagnose it correctly. Only a man ruined by evil, he suggests, confines himself to the correction of evil; for this implies not that evil finds him peculiarly sensitive, but that he is insensitive both to evil and to good. To good because he neglects

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and therefore runs the risk of destroying it ; to evil because he seeks no relief from what should stifle and nauseate. Brutalized to this degree, Jaques can see no reason why others should not be brutalized too:

> . . . all th' imbossed sores, and headed evils,
> That thou with license of free foot hast caught,
> Would'st thou disgorge into the generall world.

The portrait is drawn in high colours, but Hamlet would recognize it. Jaques presumably does not, being as has been said less alert, and therefore less perspicacious ; but here unfortunately there is a cut in the text of *As You Like It*.

Further instances of this Shakespearean subtlety are two scenes in which Jaques and Touchstone, usually allies, are brought if not into conflict, into contrast. As Touchstone is as acutely sensitive to the brutish sting as ever Jaques may have been in the past, in the present he can on occasion be resolute as Jaques is not. In response to the sting he can make conquest of Audrey, browbeat William for her possession:

> ' Abandon the society of this Female, or Clowne thou perishest . . . I will kill thee a hundred and fifty wayes, therefore tremble and depart.'

William obediently trembles. But it is Jaques of all characters whom Shakespeare chooses to administer a rebuke to Touchstone for this ; as though to make it clear that if he condemns inertia he does not, with a crudeness familiar in more recent times, advocate precipitancy ; if he deplores apathy, he does not commend brute appetite. When Touchstone contemplates a hedge-marriage so that he might have ' a good excuse hereafter ' to leave his wife, it is Jaques prevents him:

> ' And will you (being a man of your breeding) be married under a bush like a beggar? Get you to church . . .

And at the final leave-taking it is Jaques who foretells to Touchstone a future of wrangling, a ' loving voyage . . . but for two moneths victuall'd.'

At the opposite pole to the characters hitherto considered, tolerating no elaboration in love, stand Silvius and Phebe who

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seek to conform their lives to the pastoral convention, one of the fullest elaborations known. The scenes in which they appear are perhaps too short to have the effect intended, now that the convention, if not forgotten, is no longer familiar. But to an Elizabethan the sentiments and the verse—the former largely echoes, external as well as internal to the play: the latter easy yet mannered—would suffice to evoke a wealthy tradition. A modern judges of this perhaps most readily by the apostrophe to Marlowe:

> Dead Shepheard, now I (f)ind thy saw of might,
> Who ever lov'd, that lov'd not at first sight?

No incongruity is intended or feared from his introduction with fleece and crook: the tradition being rich enough to absorb him, vigorous enough to assert even beside him its actuality.

And also the apostrophe may serve to dispel some of the mist which has hung about pastoral in England since the seventeenth century, and notably since the attack of Johnson. Though actual, pastoral need not be realistic; and to apply to it realistic canons as he did is to misconceive it entirely. It is not an attempt to portray a shepherd's life: but in its purity—though frequently of course it is impure—to portray a life in which physical misery is reduced to a minimum or has disappeared. Traditionally such a life is called a shepherd's: in which therefore man is held to enjoy every happiness, if only his desires will let him. But as becomes clear with the progress of the pastoral, his desires will not. Removed from the danger of physical pain those of the intellect and the imagination become the acuter; in particular the passion of love, with neither social pressure nor economic necessity inclining it in any direction, becomes incalculable in its vagaries. It remains an ever open source of calamity. A tragic note or undertone is thus inseparable from pastoral, and if subdued is only the more insistent. It is in permanent contrast with the composure or gaiety of the rest of the score.

By their share in a tradition of this kind, the Silvius and Phebe scenes have a claim to be effective out of all proportion to their length; and the effect they are intended to produce is in the first place a serious, not a comic one. That there is a close connection between Shakespearean tragedy and comedy, I have already stated, is one of my assumptions in this paper.

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As the Old Shepherd is contrasted with Touchstone, so he is with Silvius. When the latter pours out his complaints, Corin's attitude is far from one of incomprehension:

> Oh *Corin*, that thou knew'st how I do love her.
> —I partly guesse ; for I have lov'd ere now.

Far also from impatience, for the complaints are not of the briefest ; far however from approval. To put the matter at its crudest, Silvius is not prudent in his conduct:

> That is the way to make her scorne you still.

And however charitably Corin listens to the recital of another's extravagances, he has no regret that now he is rid of his own:

> How many actions most ridiculous
> Hast thou been drawne to by thy fantasie?
> —Into a thousand that I have forgotten.

His attitude seems to be that Silvius's extravagances will pass with time as his own have passed ; meanwhile they may at least be tolerated, for they are decent.

Touchstone's reaction to the meaning with Silvius has already been noticed. Rosalind's is somewhat more complicated:

> Alas poor Shepheard searching of (thy wound),
> I have by hard adventure found my own.

She approves of the premises on which the pastoral convention is based, both that the wound of love is genuine, and that it is sharp and serious. But the assumption that therefore it is deserving of sole attention, or that by receiving such attention it can in any way be cured: she criticizes as does Corin, and less patiently. It conflicts with the common sense for which she is everywhere advocate, and which requires either as condition or as symptom of health a wide awareness of opportunity, a generous assumption of responsibility. By confining his attention to love Silvius is restricting both, frustrating his energies like the other melancholics. That Rosalind should be less patient than Corin is natural as she is younger: she cannot trust the action of time upon Silvius, when as yet she is not certain what it will be upon herself.

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For she too is tempted by love, and in danger of the pastoral convention. Though she rebukes Silvius and Phebe from the outset, she does so in language more nearly approaching theirs than ever she approached Jaques's. But the luck of comedy which (it has been suggested) stifles problems is on her side, causing Phebe to fall in love with her. She needs only to reveal herself as a woman, and the folly of pastoralism—as a convention which allows freedom to fancy or desire—comes crashing to the ground. Taught by such an example and by it teaching others, she pronounces the judgment that if Silvius and Phebe persist in love yet would remain rational creatures, they must get married.

It is the same judgment she pronounces on all lovers in the play. Of the four who are left, two only call for separate consideration: herself and Orlando.

Orlando has achieved an extravagance but, unlike Silvius, not a decent one: his verse, even in Touchstone's ears, is the 'right Butter-womens ranke to Market.' As Touchstone is concerned only to destroy he finds criticism easy, but specimens of the verse prove he is not wholly unreliable. And therefore Rosalind chooses to deal with Orlando in prose:

> These are all lies, men have died from time to time, and wormes have eaten them, but not for love.
> —I would not have my right *Rosalind* of this mind, for I protest her frowne might kill me.
> —By this hand, it will not kill a flie.

Her purpose once again is to disabuse her interlocutor about the supposed supreme importance of love. And to do so effectively she makes use at times of a coarseness almost rivalling Touchstone's:

> What would you say to me now, and I were your verie, verie Rosalind?
> —I would kisse before I spoke.
> —Nay, you were better speak first, and when you were gravel'd, for lacke of matter, you might take occasion to kisse: verie good Orators when they are out, they will spit, and for lovers, lacking (God warne us) matter, the cleanliest shift is to kisse.

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Not that she agree with Touchstone, except materially. She may say very much the same as he says, but her purpose is different. It is not to deny that desire, no more than other things, has value ; but to assess its proper value, by no means so high as Orlando thinks.

She can undertake to do so with some sureness, and command some confidence from the reader, because she herself has first-hand acquaintance with desire. All criticisms passed on others are also criticisms on herself, and she is aware of this (or if not, as on one occasion, Celia is at hand to remind her). The consequences for the play are manifold. First the criticisms, which as applying to other persons might seem scattered, are bound together as applying to her: over the pattern of the repeating *motif*, such as has been already described, she superposes as it were another pattern, or encloses it in a frame. Then the final criticism, or judgment which resumes them all, is seen to issue from the body of the play itself, not to be imposed on it by author or authority from without. Finally a breadth and a sanity in the judgment are guaranteed. If Rosalind freely acknowledges in herself the absurdities she rebukes in others—' Ile tell thee *Aliena*,' she says, ' I cannot be out of sight of *Orlando*: Ile goe find a shadow, and sigh till he come '—in return she transfers to others her own seriousness and suffering:

> ' O coz, coz, coz ; my pretty little coz, that thou didst know how many fathom deepe I am in love: but it cannot bee sounded: my affection hath an unknowne bottome, like the Bay of Portugall.'

Or in a phrase which has a foretaste or reminiscence of Donne:

> ' One inch of delay more, is a South-sea of discoverie. I pre'thee tell me, who it is quickely, and speake apace.'

The final judgment would seem to run somewhat as follows. As Rosalind says to Orlando at their first meeting: ' Love is purely a madnesse, and I tel you, deserves wel a darke house, and a whip, as madmen do ;' it is however a madness which, owing to the number of victims, there are only two ways of controlling. One is to ' forsweare the ful stream of the world, and to live in a nooke merely Monasticke '—and this way does not generally

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recommend itself. The second then must be adopted, which is marriage. Above all, whines and cries such as combine to a chorus in Act V must be prevented:

> Tell this youth what 'tis to love.
> —It is to be all made of sighes and teares,
> And so am I for *Phebe*.
> —And I for *Ganimed*.
> —And I for *Rosalind*.
> —And I for no woman.
> —It is to be all made of faith and service,
> And so am I for Phebe . . .

da capo three times. Rosalind, though as lover she joined in, as critic and judge rejects it as 'the howling of Irish wolves against the Moone.' To it the alacrity of Oliver and Celia are to be preferred: 'They are in the verie wrath of love, and they will together. Clubbes cannot part them.'

If once again this seems reminiscent of Touchstone, and of Touchstone at his worst, the distinction already drawn should be remembered. The same words can mean different things on Touchstone's lips and on Rosalind's. She is not inciting her fellow characters to marriages which shall hold only until the 'blood breaks,' but to 'high wedlock' which is 'great Juno's crown,' and a 'blessed bond'—the masquing song, though possibly not by Shakespeare, aptly summarizes certain of the play's sentiments. Further, that Rosalind and Touchstone agree on a single topic, even a topic so important as the qualities of desire, does not mean that one of them is not superior to the other. Rosalind is very obviously the superior: not however in respect of the topic on which she and Touchstone agree. She is distinguished and privileged beyond him, not because she knows desire—rather that confounds both him and her—but because she is, whereas he is not, at the same time many things besides. She is not only a capable manager of her own life, but a powerful influence for good on the lives of others. And finally a word may be put in for Touchstone himself. If Shakespeare, as has been said, does not condemn apathy in order to commend lust, neither does he disapprove of lust in order to advocate Puritanism. Touchstone is on the way to tragedy because he has allowed

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desire to get out of control ; had he controlled it, he would have built up a life more satisfactory than do those who, while living in the world, neglect desire altogether or overmuch. And therefore he remains a positive critic even in his failure, and to some extent because of it ; it is proper not only that he himself should rebuke Orlando, but also that Rosalind, taking it would seem words from his lips, should rebuke large groups of people.

If *As You Like It* is planned at all in the way I have suggested, the least title it deserves is, I think, ' unsentimental.' But for common practice I would go further and call it ' unromantic ; ' and suggest that, to get the measure of its unromanticism, no more is necessary than to read it alongside its source, Lodge's *Rosalynde*. And the title ' unromantic ' would possibly be confirmed by an investigation of the Duke's melancholy, which in this paper it has not been possible to investigate.

There is little time to return to the topic from which the paper started, the relation namely between the tragedies and the comedies. But perhaps it is obvious that, conceived as unromantic, the early comedies are a fitting preparation for the ' problem plays,' while from these to the tragedies is but a step.

JAMES SMITH.

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TRADITION AND INNOVATION TO-DAY

IN every sphere of human life there is a dispute between the traditionalists and the innovators. In politics, morals, economic technique, science, philosophy, art, religion, one party is more concerned to preserve the established canon of behaviour, the other to introduce new modes of activity. The traditionalists are impressed by the fundamental identity of human nature in all ages ; the innovators insist that circumstances, and therefore human needs, are fluid, and moreover that endless repetition causes a fatal rigidity of mind. In our age this conflict is peculiarly violent. Is it possible to discover any general principles to guide us in seeking a right balance of tradition and innovation in the bewildering affairs of the human race to-day?

I shall begin with a merely abstract discussion of the scope of tradition and novelty. By ' tradition ' I mean any system of habits inculcated in each generation by its elders. Sometimes the process of inculcating is deliberate, sometimes unwitting. Contrast, for instance, formal education and the uncontrolled contagion of manners and ideas from parents to children in the home.

By ' innovation ' I mean the abandonment of habitual behaviour, and the working out of a new habit. Innovation may sometimes take a negative form. It may consist simply in the omission of some familiar element in tradition, for instance in the denial of certain accepted values in art or morals, without the substitution of new values. On the other hand innovation may take the form of positive assertion of a new value or a new idea, in fact in the forming of a new habit, which may be either more or less well adapted to the environment. The distinction between positive and negative innovation is not absolute. Always there is something positive, since an omission involves some degree of re-organization of the elements retained. The denial of the

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traditionally accepted importance of the Christian virtues involves the re-organizing of morality or amorality under some other principle, such as the exaltation of the martial virtues, or the full acceptance of ethical scepticism.

Looking at the matter from another angle we must recognize that any particular bit of behaviour, individual or social, must have aspects of traditionalism and aspects of innovation. Pure traditionalism and pure innovation are abstractions. The adoption of steam power was a startling innovation, but the new machinery embodied, along with novelty, well-established mechanical devices, such as the wheel and the lever.

In all human behaviour, tradition inevitably plays a very great part. Indeed, even in the most revolutionary innovation tradition must overwhelmingly predominate over novelty in respect of sheer bulk, so to speak. Einstein's work presupposes Newton's, and the whole process of scientific exploration. In art, surrealism, though it discards so much of the old convention, incorporates much more. Only on the top rung of a tall ladder of tradition does the innovator come within grasp of his bit of novelty. Nevertheless, save in purely repetitive behaviour such as the repetition of a scientific experiment or the performance of a long-established religious ritual, some degree of novelty is sure to exist. And even a very slight innovation may have far-reaching significance. It may influence the whole future of mankind. Witness the first intentional sowing of a seed, from which arose the practice of agriculture. Highly significant novelty, however, is very rare. Far commoner, and far more obtrusive in a superficial view, is barren or unsuccessful innovation and trivial novelty or sheer freakishness, in which the motive is not adaptation but mere eccentricity.

It is worth while to note the kinds of influence which may cause innovation. Natural changes in the physical environment may gradually transform a culture. Thus climatic change or the process of denudation may force a people to undertake new economic techniques and to adopt a new system of ideas. More often innovation is stimulated by changes which are the direct result of human agency ; though these in turn will be largely economic in origin. Through the clash of the northern barbarians and Roman slave-owning civilization arose the feudal system. At a much later stage the rise of the bourgeois class and the introduction of

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machinery have produced much novelty in the social order, and in ideas. Again, advances in sensibility, themselves no doubt largely due to environmental changes, may cause a far-reaching revolution in thought and feeling. Thus at the beginning of the Christian era some Europeans seem to have attained a heightened realization of one another as conscious individuals, and perhaps a heightened awareness of their relation to the universe. These novel experiences produced in time far-reaching and significant innovation in Western culture. Loss of sensibility, however caused, may also have important effects. It is at least arguable that industrialism, by coarsening sensibility, particularly in the bourgeois class, has caused a pernicious kind of negative innovation in European culture, culminating in the Nazi portent. One great source of innovation in a particular culture is contact with other cultures. Early English culture, for example, was transformed and immensely enriched by the influence of the Christian Church, later by the Norman-French domination, later still by the Italian Renaissance. And in our own day each people is subjected to a constant stream of influence from the many cultures with which it comes in contact.

In situations such as the present age, in which there is strong pressure toward innovation, either through environmental change, improved economic technique, changes of sensibility, or contact with other cultures, traditionalists rally in defence of the established modes of behaviour, while innovators, protesting against this conventionality, produce all sorts of novel styles. Most of our innovations in morals, art, philosophy and social policy are likely to prove mistaken, but some may constitute the growing points from which a new culture may grow. Subsequently the unsuccessful innovations tend to be forgotten, so that innovation comes to seem a much more successful and intelligent process than it is.

The main forces which determine whether a particular individual will be more of a traditionalist or more of an innovator are, no doubt, the subtle and often unconscious needs of his personal nature. These needs are probably determined to a great extent by influences in his early life. But the forces which determine whether a particular society at a particular time shall lean more toward tradition or toward innovation, in fact whether its traditionalists or its innovators shall have the greater effect, are forces which bear upon the society as a whole. In general, a stable society, well

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adapted to its environment, or a society successfully controlled by a stable dominant class, will incline to traditionalism ; while an unstable society, or one in which the dominant class is losing its grip, will tend to spawn novelties.

On the whole, the more ancient and the more complex a tradition, the more difficult is it for the innovators to change its character. As the generations pass, a tradition may proliferate into a great mass of detail, and spread its indirect influence into every sphere of individual and social life. Moreover, it may produce a body of professional exponents who, having spent their early life in absorbing the tradition, and their maturity either in teaching it to others or in devising minute elaboration of the convention or elucidation of the sacred canon, are concerned to defend it by every possible means. Inevitably the expert practitioner of any long-established craft over-estimates the importance of his subject. The aristocrat, the cleric, the well-established bourgeois, the lawyer, and in our own day the scientist, are all prone to this error. Inevitably a dominant class, with centuries of leadership to its credit, and a vast subtle tradition impregnating all its young minds, can never see the necessity for drastic innovation. Exceptional individuals may do so, but for average members of the class traditionalism becomes an obsession, a cult. They cannot or will not recognize that the institutions and ideas for which they stand may be so radically inappropriate to existing circumstances as to call for fundamental change, perhaps for revolution.

On the other hand innovation also may become a cult. Those who begin to feel the inadequacy of an established tradition are likely to value aberration simply because it violates the tradition. Disillusioned about the established conventions, yet unable to discover or to recognize any new seminal principle which is really capable of dealing with the prevailing chaos, their minds tend to proliferate into barren extravagance. Or innovations which were at first significant may be over-worked till they become fantastic. This seems to be the case with the more extreme forms of such methods and theories as abstract art, surrealism, logical positivism, psycho-analysis, behaviourism.

What are the attributes which a tradition must have if it is to be worth preserving? It must have proved itself adequate to enable a reasonably full expression of human capacity in the

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circumstances of the past. In the present it must also be adequate. If significant changes have meanwhile occurred, the tradition must prove itself capable of development in such a way as to become adequate to the new state of affairs. This will be impossible if it is a rigid or closed tradition. Every wholesome tradition is elastic, is adaptable. Not only so, but to be wholesome a tradition must positively stimulate the minds of its adherents to further creation. It must open up vistas yet to be explored, suggest enterprises yet to be attempted. In fact, though in essence perennial, it must be capable of significant innovation in relation to changing circumstances. Thus the Christian tradition in its early phase proved itself capable of continuous development without violation of its central principles. Whether to-day, under its vast carapace of doctrine and institutionalism, it is still adaptable, may be doubted. Feudalism also was at one time a supple and pregnant tradition, till it ossified and gave way to bourgeois culture. This also was for a while capable of growth, but the increasing weight of its tradition is now preventing it from adjusting itself to changing circumstances.

What are the attributes which innovation must have if it is to be wholesome? While assimilating and developing all that is still adequate in the established tradition, it must discard the tradition's errors. It must be truly creative. That is, it must achieve more than mere negative novelty, which arises from a contraction of experience, from a shunning of relevant facts or feelings. It must either be a means to, or else it must actually constitute, an enlargement of experience. It must facilitate, or actually consist of, some new expression of human capacity for penetrating and comprehensive apprehension of the world (including the self), and for appropriate action. This statement raises problems about the validity of 'penetrating' and 'appropriate.' Dispassionate philosophical enquiry seems to me to support these concepts.

Let us now consider the place of tradition and innovation explicitly in relation to the contemporary world. I will begin by mentioning certain traditions which have far-reaching influence to-day. There are the various religious traditions, the Christian, the Buddhist, the Islamic and so on, with their many diverse forms. Although new sects may occasionally appear, the great religious traditions are by now more or less fixed. Their supporters would claim that this is so because the true religion (whichever one is

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accepted as true) has expressed the fundamental facts about man's nature and his relation to the universe, so that any change in the tradition would be for the worse. On the other hand, opponents of the religions affirm that the religious traditions are changeless because they have lost touch with men's changing conditions and growing knowledge, and with their developing feelings. In Europe the Christian tradition combines with the traditional veneration of ancient Greece and Rome to form what was until recently the dominant cultural and educational tradition of the West. According to the champions of innovation, this great system of ideas and values becomes increasingly rigid and increasingly remote from the practical needs of the modern world. There is certainly a large measure of truth in this claim. We should not, however, hastily conclude that the Graeco-Roman-Christian tradition is therefore radically and hopelessly unsound, that there is nothing whatever in it of first rate and permanent importance. Now that all the cultures of the world are accessible to one another as never before, and the conditions of Europe itself are so rapidly changing, revolutionary and significant innovations may arise to revivify the Western tradition.

The tradition of natural science is still fluid, at least superficially. Though in the latter part of the nineteenth century its general principles seemed to be already crystallizing, since then many of them have shown a surprising tendency to dissolve and re-form, particularly in the case of physics. On the other hand the ' scientific spirit,' the fundamental assumptions and temper of scientists, remains very constant. The character of the scientific spirit is summed up by such words as ' objectivity,' ' detachment,' ' observation,' ' the facts,' ' analysis,' ' induction.' Though theories change, the scientific spirit, by which I mean the scientific attitude and the scientific method, remains. These have, indeed, acquired something of the sanctity of the Christian attitude and the Christian method in an earlier age. It may well be doubted whether those who have been rigorously schooled in the scientific tradition are any more capable, whatever they themselves believe, of seeing the limitations of the attitude which is called scientific than orthodox Christians are capable of seeing the limitations of official Christianity.

Of the political traditions, Conservatism, oddly enough, is

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superficially the most supple of all. Expediency has often forced conservatives to accept ideas and policies inconsistent with their own tradition. The Conservatism of to-day is superficially like the radicalism of yesterday. All the same, in its central though often unwitting conviction, namely that for the good of society orthodox values should be preserved intact, and that the present ruling class should continue to rule, Conservatism is unalterable. Liberal Democracy, both as theory and as the confused practice of the so-called democratic states (whether their governments happen to be Conservative or Liberal), seems bound either to undergo much transformation or to wither. In the minds of many of its devotees Liberal Democracy has already crystallized as a sacred and unalterable canon in the form laid down by nineteenth century Liberalism. But Liberal Democracy in a broader sense is the prevailing temper of the Western peoples, very imperfectly expressed in their governments and by the Liberal political parties. This prevailing temper was for long unchallenged, and was degenerating into perfunctory lip-service to liberal principles ; but in face of the dread object-lesson of Fascism and Nazism it is beginning to shown new signs of life and adaptability. Sir Richard Acland's movement, for instance, is based on the firm foundation of traditional liberal values, but it has profited very greatly from socialist thought.

Socialism is still a fluid tradition, but many of its supporters show a dangerous craving for othodoxy and heresy-hunting. This distinction between central principles which are still capable of development and the tendency of the faithful to insist on rigid orthodoxy in relation to every jot of the canon is most striking in the case of Communism. The Marxian theory of dialectical materialism, if I understand it rightly, is in many ways supple and pregnant, but its champions often refuse to let it develop. In Nazism, theory is chaotic, extravagant, and probably not seriously believed even by the faithful, since it is wholly an expression of emotional needs. The Nazi tradition, in fact, is a hotch-potch of fragments adopted from other and often conflicting traditions. Like Conservatism it is superficially supple, since at a moment's notice its leaders, driven by expediency, can make friends with those who were formerly its most hated enemies. But up to the present it is impossible to say whether this startling change of front will lead

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to any significant novelty in the Nazi tradition. Probably it will strengthen the collectivist tendency in Nazism without establishing the values of sincere socialism. Like Conservatism, but in a much more extravagant manner, Nazism regards the state with pseudo-mystical adoration. Nazism and the more barbarous kind of Conservatism are essentially modernized versions of tribal or racial cults, aspects of the new religion of Nationalism which began to be born when the Christian churches were losing their claim to universality. Nationalism, indeed, has by now usurped most of the moral authority of the churches. Not until very recently has Cosmopolitanism, which has always had some adherents, begun to be a serious rival to Nationalism. By Cosmopolitanism I mean the tradition which accepts the unity of all mankind, and seeks a unified world-society and world-culture. Cosmopolitanism, which is purely political and social, must be distinguished from Humanism, which at least in one interpretation, includes, along with Cosmopolitanism, a denial of superhuman values, and an assertion that the development of human culture is the supreme goal.

This sketch of contemporary traditions might be continued indefinitely to cover the innumerable conventions of art, philosophy, manners, personal ideals and so on. But enough has been said to illustrate the fact that throughout our social life the controversy between tradition and innovation is acute.

Traditionalists tell us that one of the main causes of our modern troubles is our increasing failure to understand and appreciate traditional European culture, and our consequent childish craving for novelty. They affirm that the essential principles and values which distinguish civilization from barbarism have been adequately conceived and expressed by the ancient Greeks and Romans and the early Christians ; and that since then they have been fully elaborated by the mediæval Churchmen and the Renaissance writers and artists. It is even suggested that only those peoples who were at one time within the Roman Empire are now civilized in spirit. If we would be civilized, we must be constantly and profoundly receptive to this great tradition, receptive to such an extent that no other influence can seriously compete with it. European culture, with its roots in Rome and Greece and Palestine, and its strong trunk of mediæval Christianity and the Renaissance, is necessary to us (we are told) just because it is the very spirit of

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Europe, and because our individual minds are expressions of it. To lose touch with this is to doom ourselves to mental ruin, to abandon all assured standards, to lay ourselves open to persuasion by every kind of false ideals. However valuable other cultures may be for those who have been nurtured in them, for us they are alien and dangerous. To introduce scraps of Eastern lore into our education is merely to confuse our minds and to waste time which we might have used far more profitably. We can never really understand alien cultures or enter into their spirit. By long study a European may gain superficial acquaintance with Indian or Chinese thought, and persuade himself that he has attained real insight ; but to the educated Indian or Chinese he remains an alien. On the other hand any truly educated European will easily see that he is culturally superficial. Similarly when Easterns seek to absorb Western culture they acquire only a veneer of it. The moral, we are told, is that East is East and West is West, and we must not go awhoring after strange gods.

An even greater disaster, according to the traditionalists, overtakes us when we go awhoring after the gods of science. If the young are brought up on science instead of Graeco-Roman-Christian culture, they will never be civilized. They will miss those central experiences, intellectual and emotional, which alone can orientate a man rightly, and without which no decent society is possibly. Science, it is said, pins men's attention to the physical, blinds them to the fact that man is more than matter, starves whatever capacity they may have for the distinctively human activities of mutual personal awareness, of art, of comprehensive philosophy, of religion. It does this, not only by claiming to explain away all that is distinctive in these activities, but also by contracting attention within the sphere of scientific minutiæ, so that the distinctively human capacities have no opportunity of developing beyond a rudimentary stage. Consequently the typical scientifically educated mind is incapable of realizing how farcical it is to disparage these activities and try to account for them wholly in terms of sub-human causes. On the other hand a few of the scientifically educated, rebelling against the dehumanizing influence of science, but lacking the humanistic discipline and experience, indulge in inept excursions into cultural regions in which they cannot properly orientate themselves.

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In contrast to the traditionalists, the innovators point out that if there had never been any daring innovation in the past there would never have been any culture at all. For culture is the product of past innovations. It arose through the cumulative effect of such acts as the first throwing of a stone, the first chipping of a flint, the first use of a roller, the first use of a sign. Moreover, as has already been remarked, an alien culture has often been grafted on to a native culture with beneficial effect. Rome learned from Greece, and Greece from Egypt. And what would European culture have been without the influence of the Hebrews?

To this argument the traditionalist may reply that these were not really cases of grafting upon a mature stock but simply stages in the development of European culture itself. Egypt, Greece, Rome and Palestine form the soil in which it is rooted. From these many sources sprang an individual and distinctive tradition adequate to the needs of the civilized European. This tradition is fully formed, and permeated through and through by the same distinctive European spirit. It is far too organic to suffer any radical change without disintegration.

But in reply the innovators may say that science itself is really another stage in this very process of growth. Science is, indeed, the essential European spirit become better informed, more conscious of the limitations and the true scope of human intellect, more aware of the anatomy of the physical universe, more objectively aware of the anatomy of human nature itself, and so on. In denying that the scientific spirit is now the truly European spirit brought up to date, the traditionalists overlook an important fact, namely that since the formation of the Graeco-Roman-Christian tradition the circumstances of the human race have suffered a revolutionary change, and for this reason there must be a revolutionary change of culture. The revolutionary changes in circumstances are all connected with the rise of the class of commercial individualists. Their prosperity enabled them to produce science and to apply the principles of science to industry. The result has been an amazing change in man's physical environment and ideas. Science has undermined the old tradition. It has made the universe seem much vaster in space and time. It has persuaded many men that the individual human being is utterly insignificant, that the human race itself is a trivial accident in a huge physical process, that our

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most exalted aspirations are the by-products of simple animal cravings and ultimately of chemical changes in the body, that all value is purely subjective, that morality is nothing but tribal custom, that religion is an illusion, that the legend of a benevolent deity is false, that the old tradition's respect for ' love ' and ' reason,' as the ' right ' way of life, has no objective justification.

Up to a point this iconoclasm was beneficial. It shattered a lot of bad metaphysics and bad ethics. But it destroyed too much else. Pragmatically it is condemned by the mental bankruptcy and distress of the modern world.

While some of those who have been dominated by science are driven to complete cynicism about all values, others have claimed to derive a new set of values from science itself. The only real good, they say, is pleasure, the only real evil is pain. Consequently the morally right social aim is the greatest amount of pleasure for the greatest number of individuals. Now if by ' pleasure ' is meant merely the easy fulfilling of natural impulses such as hunger and mating, this ideal is utterly insufficient. If, on the other hand, a distinction is allowed between ' low ' and ' high ' pleasures, and the goal is the fulfilling of the distinctively human capacities of men, then the ideal is not purely ' scientific.' It borrows something vital from the old rejected culture. Others of science's devotees have regarded power over the environment as the only real value. They seek to persuade us that the social goal should be to equip mankind with ever mightier power to control physical nature, to exploit fully not only the Earth but all the planets and the very stars. It does not seem to occur to them that the ends which power achieves must be judged on their own merits. They may be either good or evil.

Ironically, while science has tended to blind men to the true values, it has given them unprecedented means to achieve those values ; if only they were to desire them. For the first time it is physically possible to create a world-wide society of free and responsible individuals, in fact to found a civilized community in which there would be no necessity that most men should spend their lives in toil and penury. Through mechanized industry, every human being might be given the opportunity of a free and happy and a far more fully human life. Moreover machinery has brought the ends of the earth together. The planet is now a single economic

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system. The fortunes of every people depend largely on the fortunes of others. Whether we will or not, it is inevitable (unless civilization, and science with it, are destroyed by war) that racial and national cultures should now be merged into a general human culture. In these circumstances the old national and racial traditions are hopelessly inadequate.

All this is true ; but the essential condition for the right use of the power that science has given is that men should have clear experience in a sphere in which science has little to tell them, namely the sphere of the distinctively human values. In this sphere the old culture, in spite of all its limitations, is far more helpful than science. Indeed such moral ideas as are incorporated in the scientific tradition are all derived from the old Graeco-Roman-Christian culture.

The new tradition has proved its practical inadequacy (and so has the old one) by the tragic failure to control economic individualism and to impose any sort of moral discipline on the warring national states. Its inability to give man anything ' worth living for ' has resulted in an astounding crop of artificial and fantastic pseudo-religious movements, and in a widespread revulsion from reason. More momentously, this revulsion itself has contributed to Fascism and Nazism, in both of which a pseudo-mystical element is used as a means to utilize the unsatisfied craving of ordinary folk for some kind of ideal more commanding than individualistic economic power or sheer pleasure.

Clearly the time has come for a new phase in the growth of human culture. It must begin with a re-examination both of the old Graeco-Roman-Christian tradition and of the new tradition which is dominated by science. Each must be seen in the light of the other. This is not the place to explore the possibilities of such a venture. Its main outlines, however, can already be dimly foreseen. In revulsion from the brutality which is now sweeping the world, the new culture will almost certainly turn once more to the traditional virtues. While rejecting almost the whole of Christian metaphysics, it will include a rehabilitation and re-interpretation of Christian intuitive experience, and of the Christian value of ' love,' or of mutual awareness, mutual respect and mutual responsibility. It will also involve, presumably, a rehabilitation of the Greek value of ' reason,' as opposed to the irrationalism

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which has found its reduction to absurdity in Nazi culture. On the other hand, it will surely abandon, along with Christian metaphysics, the metaphysical assumptions of materialistic science, and the scientific claim to explain away the distinctively human attributes. These distinctively human attributes all derive from human intelligence and human self-consciousness and other-consciousness. They issue in personal intercourse, in civilized social organization, in art, science, philosophy and so on. The new culture will assuredly reject the hasty verdict of nineteenth-century materialistic science on these activities. At the same time it will preserve the essential scientific spirit itself. But this scientific spirit, the great achievement of recent centuries, will be clarified and amplified, and even transformed. Hitherto it has been hampered by an uncritical faith that the very valuable method of analysis and the very fertile postulate of materialism which is based on analysis, are *all*-sufficient. Presumably the great development of scientific analysis has now to be supplemented by discovering and applying the true principles of scientific synthesis, or the scientific study of wholes. Attempts have already been made in this direction, for instance in the Emergence Theory, in Holism, and (in a very different mood) in Dialectical Materialism, but hitherto no attempt has succeeded in doing full justice both to the parts and to the whole.

OLAF STAPLEDON.

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MUSIC AND THE DRAMATIC[1]

I.

IN speaking of the relation between music and drama one runs the risk of confusing a number of different things ; it is therefore necessary to be as clear as possible about one's terms at the outset. By ' drama ' one generally means a representation of life and action intended for performance on a stage by living actors: in speaking of music-drama, or opera, one may mean that such a representation is illustrated by the *addition* of music so that the music merely intensifies the action ; or one may mean that the visual representation in such a performance is merely a specific example of some conception of human experience which the music is presenting in general terms, and is therefore an aid to listening which masquerades as a distraction.

Euphuistically one also speaks of music as ' dramatic ' when no visual representation is involved but simply when the music seems to express emotions of an immediacy such that they suggest or imply a number of imaginary protagonists in a series of events (say the battle of the Tragic Hero with Fate or Destiny) which have the unity of interest of a play. This is a loose interpretation of the word ' dramatic ' as applied to music, but in some ways it is the most important and the most frequently employed. To consider in some detail this relation between music and the dramatic is certainly the most fundamental, and probably the only pertinent approach to an æsthetic of opera, for it is useless to discuss operatic music and non-operatic music as though they were activities distinct and separable.

II.

If the notorious opposition between Classical and Romantic means anything at all it means, I would say, something like this.

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[1] *A Key to Opera*, by Frank Howes and Phillip Hope-Wallace (Blackie, 5/-).

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By ' classical ' music we mean music which ' objectifies ' a body of personal experience which will usually be sanctioned by tradition. Technically this experience will most often be incarnated in forms which are predominantly melodic and built on the bases of the intervals which the human voice, owing to the nature of the harmonic series, instinctively sings ; (in normal circumstances it is impossible to sound a single tone without for instance also sounding the octave and twelfth above fairly prominently) ; and in forms which are polyphonic because, if it be granted that the essence of music is melody then the formal products of polyphonic structure are *ipso facto* the inherently musical ones. Often too this sort of music will be contrapuntal because counterpoint is the means of organizing polyphony, and such technical organization is obviously inseparable from the organization of experience which we call objectivity—inseparable, that is, if the music is alive. It is apposite here to refer, among many others, to Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Verdi, Glinka, all composers who, towards the end of their lives, turned to a renewed study of counterpoint as a preparation for their most mature and representative work.[2]

By ' romantic ' music, on the other hand, we mean music that is personal in the subjective, introspective sense, music which, glorifying personal feeling, tends to be anti-traditional and therefore inclines, technically, away from the inherently musical melodic-polyphonic forms towards forms which (like the symphonic poem and the leit-motif music-drama) depend more on literary and pictorial associations. Such forms make their effect by a reliance on the ' dramatic ' vividness of harmony considered not as the

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[2]And *cf.* this statement of (strangely enough) Fréderic Chopin: ' When Beethoven is obscure and seems to lack unity the cause is not the rather savage pretended originality for which we honour him: it is that he turns his back on the eternal principles ; Mozart never. Each of Mozart's parts has its own direction which, even while harmonizing with the others, forms a song and follows it perfectly. In that is the counterpoint, *punto contra punto*. It's the custom to learn harmony before counterpoint, that is, the succession of notes that makes up the harmony . . . but in music the purest logic is the *fugue*. To know the fugue thoroughly is to know the element of all reason and consequence.'

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logical result of a confluence of melodic voices but rather as a sequence of chordal blocks marking so many rhetorical points in a musical argument. (This rhetorical conception of harmony later becomes associated with the exploitation of orchestral ' colour '). Classical music will usually be founded on a stable tonality because tonalities are built up by tradition and by the melody-motives the human voice sings naturally—and we must remember that in a sense equal tempered diatonicism is less stable than the more flexible system of the so-called ecclesiastical modes in that it is more artificial: Romanticism in music tends to be associated with the *disruption* of tonalities, as in the chromaticism of Gesualdo, Liszt, Wagner and Schönberg.

Of course no hard and fast line can be drawn between the two types and it is absurd to suggest that ' classical ' music—in the sense in which I have used the term—can never be ' dramatic.' Vittoria will achieve dramatic effects of the utmost poignancy by the placing of a simple triad or by an unexpected distribution of vocal sonorities. Monteverde writes homophonic harmonic passages directly designed for the dramatic thrill, and the modulations of Haydn or Scarlatti will be as dramatic as they are ungrammatical. Bach or Schütz will be as anguished in their chromaticism as Mozart is piercingly sweet. But just as, with all these composers, the ' dramatic ' effect is merely a part of a more complex total response, so the technical device is used merely as part of a traditional technique which is in each case—I think it may safely be said—fundamentally vocal, and there is no reliance on the harmonic thrill, or upon sensation, in and for itself. The ' revolutionary ' Monteverde never finally abjured the principles of his forbears, and the significance of the often-celebrated rhapsodic ' romanticism ' of Bach's *Chromatic Fantasia* lies in its being introductory to the magnificent *Fugue*. Only when a composer's sensibility tends to depart from a human centrality and sanity does he relinquish the formal principles, usually polyphonic, of musical tradition. Machaut, Palestrina, Bach, Haydn, Mozart, Fauré, and on the whole Berlioz, I would list as typical ' classical ' composers ; Gesualdo, Liszt, Wagner, Chopin, Berg, and (more equivocally) the Beethoven of the *Appassionata*, as typical romanticists. Brahms occupies a half-way house and his importance lies most in the fact that he kept the true musical tradition alive at a time when it was

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hardly fashionable.

I list these names merely indicatively and without wishing to suggest that there is any point in pigeonholing artists ; what I do want to suggest is that this balance or oscillation between the inherently musical on the one hand and the extramusical conception of emotional autobiography (incarnated most obviously in ' dramatic ' harmony) on the other, has been a force of great potency in the evolution of musical history and one which has a direct bearing on the development of opera. I think we shall understand more clearly how the two attitudes act together and against one another if we examine for a moment an element of them both which we have not yet specifically considered, namely rhythm.

III.

For all music, with the possible exception of such a static *tour de force* as Erik Satie's *Socrate*, implies in some degree physical movement. It may be that ' classical ' music tends to cultivate the plastic assymetrical rhythms inherent in the human singing voice, whereas ' romantic ' music tends to exploit the dramatic effect of violently contrasted physical movements of the kind exemplified in the dance ; and it may be that it is a bad thing for music to become so intimately associated with the dance that it loses its linear independence and restricts its melody to the extra-musical demands of metre. But at the same time the rhythmic vitality of Vittoria as of Bach depends on a continual tension between (vocal) rhythm and (dance) metre, just as a piece of mature Shakespearean blank verse depends on a tension between metre and the rhythm of speech. The two elements are mutually inter-dependent and during the history of music the dance has fought more or less impartially now on the side of the human voice and of inherent musicality, now on the side of dramatic truth and harmonic experiment. The physical movement of the dance is the common denominator which is shared by music and the drama equally, it is the source from which the fountain of opera springs.

IV.

The dance has always been a step ahead of music. It was a highly organized ritualistic art before European music was born as expressive melody ; by the time music had developed as a great

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religious art the dance was turning away from ritual towards the pursuance of display upon the stage. It carried music, via popular religious art and the puppet show, with it ; the Renaissance, ' the time at which the modern world was born,' saw also the emergence of the exhibitionism of classical ballet. The ' organic ' relation between music and the dance gave place to the exquisite filigree of a sophisticated entertainment.

That the ambivalence which we have observed between music and the dramatic was implicit in the dance itself in its contrasted elements of pantomime and perfection of abstract design is testified by the numerous contemporary disputes, culminating in that between Noverre and Angiolini, as to the degree of conventionalism desirable. But it was not until words were introduced into spectacular entertainment in an attempt to imitate the drama of the Greeks that the problem of dramatic truth forcibly asserted itself. Musicality and the ' dramatic,' abstract design and pantomime, the stylized singer's opera and the ideal of dramatic realism, aria and recitative, solo dance and mime, all these are examples of the same fundamental dichotomy. Where the convention is stylized and sophisticated the human voice and perfection of design hold sway ; when realism is encouraged the voice is reduced to a condition of intensified declamation and the drama is embodied in the harmony and sonority of the orchestra. (Italians such as Puccini preserved the voice's claim to—at least—equality only by vulgarizing its musical qualities beyond recognition). If opera is too completely musical, as in the *opera seria* of Alessandro Scarlatti,[3] Cesti, Handel, Marcello or Piccini, with its stylized *da capo* aria, it may be boring because the representational, extra-

[3]I refer to the ' commercial ' opera of the middle period of Scarlatti's career—the opera that set the fashion. In his early and very late work the intensely dramatic daring of his harmonies and modulations is attributable to a polyphonic cast of thinking which relates him, as Professor Dent has pointed out, more closely to Purcell and Monteverde than to the eighteenth-century tradition. As far as one can tell without seeing and hearing the works performed, the relative importance of *recitativo secco*, *recitativo stromentato*, and *aria*, was in these operas very carefully calculated with reference to their dramatic and musical stylization.

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musical part of it seems unnecessary, a fortuitous visual titillation: if the opera is too realistic it may be boring because the musical part of it will then seem absurd. The *verismo* of the latterday Wagnerians cannot escape this charge, nor can some of the music-drama of Wagner himself, although he fortunately seldom followed through the implications of his theories but rather tried to seek dramatic justification for the lyrical moments of his work. Probably the only successful ' realistic ' opera is that of Moussorgsky and Dargomijsky (but not Borodin who is comparatively Italianate) where the exoticism of the subject itself provides a convention and where the emotions involved are ' primitive ' and violent enough to give heightened speech-movement a musical validity. The danger implicit in a realistic interpretation of the verbal text is that the opera may over-emphasize the topical and local, rather in the same way as ' romantic ' music overstresses the element of personality. The ideal opera, like ' classical ' music, will not ignore the immediate dramatic situation but will transcend it by reincarnating it in purely musical terms of more than topical and local application.

To say that singer's opera is artificial and realistic opera natural is, then, patently oversimple. An opera of Piccini is not necessarily less ' real ' than an opera of Gluck because it is less ' like life ' ; what matters is that a convention should be employed sensitively and without confusion of values. Monteverde approached the sensitive compromise in his *Orfeo* and *Incoronazione di Poppaea* when he combined the aristocratic masque, the symphonic *ritornelli*, and the complex polyphonic madrigal of (say) the brilliant Orazio Vecchi with the passionate homophonic declamation and the bold modulations of his dramatic recitative—recitative so lyrical as to approach more nearly to song than to intensified speech.

Gluck too attained it in some measure since for all his insistence on naturalism he inherited the stylization of the courtly ballet of Cambert, while his vocal technique purified and perhaps etiolated but did not destroy the florid vocal organism of his predecessors. When Gluck remarked that ' a misplaced appogiatura, a shake, a roulade, can destroy the effect of an entire scene,' he admitted by implication that artistically placed these ornaments were desirable. *Iphigénie en Tauride* may be a masterpiece of psychological subtlety but its quality of exquisite moral elevation is directly proportional to the beautiful purity of its music. Even Rameau, who was

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regarded as a die-hard revolutionary by reason of his barbarous and cacophonous harmonic experiments, derives much of the shapeliness of his *arioso* from the courtly melody of Lully, though he has a finer potency, while his ' realistic ' harmonies often tend to fall into cliché, one chordal construction to represent ' fear,' another to represent ' horror,' so that they led not so much in the direction of realism as to a narrower form of convention. Berlioz's wonderful *Les Troyens* adapts the technique of Gluck to a wider canvas ; it is interesting to note how he introduced into his inherently musical anti-Wagnerian treatment of the opera stylized *pantomimes expressives* in the manner of Spontini and Méhul.

V.

Rameau repented of his notoriously brusque aphorism ' La mélodie naît de l'harmonie ' when, towards the end of his career, he remarked that if he were twenty years younger he would abandon some of his harmony and adopt Pergolesi and the Italian vocal school as his model. Lecerf de la Viéville, at the time of Lully's heyday, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau in the latter half of the eighteenth century, complained of the too blatant obtrusiveness of the orchestra (' . . . But the accompaniment would rend the rocks! Pretty compensation! Is it the orchestra who is the hero? No, it is the singer . . . '): while even Mozart, whose orchestration so subtly underlines the vocal contour, explicitly stated that the voice took precedence over all. Only in Mozart's operas—and in the late Shakespearean operas of Verdi—has the ideal fusion, the musical-dramatic compromise, been successfully accomplished. Mozart was, it is true, fortunate in that the degree of stylization implicit in *opera buffa* was fairly clearly defined through its derivation from *singspiel* and the *Commedia dell'Arte* so that Mozart's flexible genius was able to exploit this conventionalism both in the interests of musicality and of psychological acumen: but the way in which he uses the elaborate musical polyphony of the concerted aria to convey the attitudes of a number of characters to a situation, and their attitudes to each other's attitudes to the situation simultaneously, is a miracle of musical-cum-psychological compression and a proof that the inherently musical potentialities of the human voice can convey, in the hands of a genius, all the gallant flourish and tragic pathos of a group of dramatic protagon-

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ists, and much more besides. Here the great artist turns to advantage all the resources, even the apparent limitations, of his medium.[4]

Desdemona's terrible cry at the end of the Willow song is another example of the fusion of dramatic and musical effect ; here is the perfect collaboration between the text, the singer and the orchestra. ' I have tried to give Boito's verses the most true and significant accents in my power,' Verdi remarked, and the passions, the hatreds, the sensual and supersensual loves of human beings have never been delineated with greater intensity and power. Yet through all this human drama the soaring fountain of melody has a golden richness and nobility that belongs unmistakably, despite its different idiom, to the same world as the long supple lines of Alessandro Scarlatti or of Marcello's *Didone*, the work which Verdi admired above all the achievements of Baroque opera. Not since Marenzio and Giovanni Gabrieli had Italian music attained to such fiery brilliance, such sensuous glitter and such ætherial solemnity ; this music indeed ' needs youthfulness of the senses, impetuousness of the blood, fulness of life.'

If *Otello* seems to be at once singer's opera and realistic opera the position occupied by ***Falstaff*** is perhaps still more significant. Sir John is a Shakespearean Falstaff, conceived ' in the round.' But the atmosphere of the opera is essentially unrealistic, magical, fantastic, with a witty translucence and a quivering radiance like the play of sunlight upon water. Even in the exquisite music given to the young lovers Verdi's critical agility is operative—the aristocracy of the music comes from his ability to stand back from his emotions, covertly to parody himself. The kaleidoscopic melodic construction, the shimmering vivacity of the orchestration, are a sublimation of Cimarosa and Pergolesi ; the

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[4] *cf.* the Sextet from Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*, and some of the best of Rossini. But early nineteenth-century Italian opera reduced the harmonic framework to a few conventional gestures, and then concentrated on melodic vitality and fluency ; in the best work of (say) Vittoria, in the fugues from Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier*, in the concerted arias from Mozart's three great operas, the subtlety of the harmonic effect is inseparable from the complex organization of the independent melodic parts.

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fairy music is a quintessence of the fanciful, quite distinct from the fairy music of Weber or Mendelssohn ; and the final fugue is a master-stroke, summing up the spirit of gossamer-like fancy in a framework of aloof and aristocratic intellectuality. Here the most inherently musical and classical of all forms becomes the logical consummation of a stylized drama that is an epitome of Mediterranean culture. At once human and supernatural, this work is the ideal realization of the ethos of the early classical opera of Monteverde.

No opera is more fruitful with intimations of the future than *Falstaff*. A study of the score marked a turning-point in the career of Busoni, and although it may seem a far cry from the fanciful vision of *Falstaff* to the mystical vision of Busoni's *Faust* the texture of the music, with its spontaneous contrapuntal flow, is surprisingly similar in both works, and both, being preoccupied with magic rather than the realistic, are related to the tradition of the puppet show and of the *Commedia dell'Arte*. No one, however, seems to have followed up Busoni's tentative experiments and to the average twentieth-century composer who manifests no power of sustained melodic line and little understanding of the basic principles of the human voice, some modification of the Wagnerian symphonic opera still offers the path of least resistance. So fine and sensitive a musician as Alban Berg seems to have felt, in composing that macabre Wagnerian aftermath *Wozzeck*, that the symphonic opera left much to be desired from the point of view of the musically significant form, and to have endeavoured to ameliorate its deficiencies by imposing an excessively elaborate musical formalism arbitrarily on top of music which remains in essence expressionistic. Very rarely symphonic opera may itself attain to an adequate stylization ; *Tristan* possibly does, and certainly *Pelléas et Mélisande*. But the Debussy opera is a unique case, and although the restrained declamation of the voice and the sensitive colouring of the orchestra emphasize the nuances of the verbal text with a delicacy and precision which has never been paralleled, the atmosphere of the play as a whole is so remote, fantastical and musical in conception that it cannot be regarded as a realistic drama ' illustrated ' by music ; rather is it poetry dissolving into music, somewhat like Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, except that here it is the musician who creates the metamorphosis rather than the poet.

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Dukas, in his superb *Ariane et Barbe Bleue*, worked out an interesting compromise of the Wagnerian leit-motif-cum-symphonic method with the utmost austerity of orchestration and with vocal lines which, although declamatory, have tremendous range and virility. Fauré's *Pénélope* develops this compromise further, for here hints of the leit-motif are subservient to a restrained, subtle lyricism which is an aristocratic sublimation of the French *mélodie*, to a delicate manipulation of orchestral sonorities, and to a stylized ' classical ' mastery of counterpoint, exemplified particularly in canonic finales. The fantastic operas of Janácek are on the whole an eccentric (though very powerful) phenomenon, since, starting from speech-rhythm somewhat in the manner of Moussorgsky, they developed in an increasingly agonized and disrupted fashion towards an esoteric symbolism which may, like the later work of Bartók, be expressive of the plight of the contemporary human consciousness in spiritual isolation, but which certainly does little towards solving the problem of the ' biographical ' and musical balance in opera.

VI.

Figaro, Don Juan, Falstaff, Pelléas, prove that opera may be an adequate as well as an intermittently beautiful form. But, being a sophisticated entertainment, its conventions do not evolve of themselves ; they require thought, careful consideration. In an age in which opera is (comparatively speaking) a commercial proposition, there is usually little time for thought ; to-day there is plenty of time to think but few people to listen to the operas that have been thought about. But I do not believe that the problem is *fundamentally* economic, or that opera is in a relatively more desperate plight than the other ' serious ' arts ; there is a more than fortuitous link between apparent economic difficulties and artistic ones—the inability of most composers to-day to think in terms of the human voice, their propensity to substitute rhetoric for sustained melodic line. No doubt this is why many intelligent contemporary composers who found the symphonic opera uncongenial—who realized that Wagner's interweaving of ' pregnant thematic fragments ' in some of his later work bears about as much relationship to genuine polyphony as margarine to butter—turned not to the stylization of the singer's opera but to the stylization of ballet. The disillusion of the puppet-tragedy of Stravinsky's

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Petrouchka leads in its extreme form to the ' cubist ' preoccupation with *things* which is exemplified in Satie's *Parade, Mercure* and *Relâche*. In a sense the abstract design, the symmetrical melodic and rhythmic patterns of Satie's ballets mark the culmination of a tendency which had been developing ever since the swan-song of the Italian virtuoso vocal tradition—which is the elegiac melody of Bellini—merged into the great slow waltz tunes of Tchaikowsky's classical ballet.

The dance, as we have seen, may encourage a flourishing vocal tradition where there is one ; but I do not think, despite the fact that Vaughan Williams's *Job*, musically one of the finest works of the twentieth century, was conceived as a ' masque for dancing,' that it can provide an adequate substitute for such a tradition. It is significant that Albert Roussel, in his *Padmâvatî, La Naissance de la Lyre*, and *Aenéas*, should have reintroduced the voice into a convention that is basically the stylization of the *dance*. With his free and plastic melodic sense, combined with his agile response to physical movement, no composer could have been better fitted to effect this re-creation of an art-form, the *opéra-ballet*, which had been moribund since the time of Rameau. From the point of view of the *future* of the relation between music and the stage, *Padmâvatî* and *Aenéas* seem to me probably the most important productions of the twentieth century.

VII.

Any attempt to provide a ' key ' to opera should, in my opinion, develop the suggestions tentatively put forward in these pages. It should consider the relation between music and the conception of the ' dramatic ' ; and it should trace the incessantly shifting relation between the voice and the dance. The book referred to at the head of this review makes, in an introductory chapter, a few perfunctory references to the dance and to the question of realism but does not approach the fundamentals of operatic æsthetic. The other chapters settle down to a straightforward ' history ' such as could be gleaned from the encyclopædic text-books. As a history it is competent—except that there is no reference to the opera of Fauré or Janácek, whereas the minor exponents of *verismo* are listed *in toto* ; but the adequate ' key ' to opera has yet to be moulded.

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REVALUATIONS (XIII):

COLERIDGE IN CRITICISM

THAT Coleridge was a rarely gifted mind is a commonplace. It is perhaps equally a commonplace that what he actually accomplished with his gifts, the producible achievement, appears, when we come to stocktaking, disappointingly incommensurate. That ' perhaps ' registers a hesitation: judges qualified in the religious and intellectual history of the past century might, I think, reply that actually Coleridge was a great power, exercising influence in ways that must be credited to him for very notable achievement, and that we cannot judge him merely by reading what is extant of him in print.[1] My concern, however, is with the field of literary criticism. That his performance there justifies some disappointment is, I believe, generally recognized. But I believe too that this recognition stresses, in intention, rather the superlativeness of the gifts than shortcoming in the performance. The full disparity, in fact, doesn't get clear recognition very readily; there are peculiar difficulties in the way—at least, these are the conclusions to which, after reconsidering the body of Coleridge's work in criticism, I find myself brought.

The spirit of that reconsideration had better be made plain at once. Let me start, then, by reminding the reader of the introduction to the standard scholarly edition of *Biographia Literaria*. The ninety pages or so are devoted almost wholly to discussing Coleridge's relation to Kant and other German philosophers. Now

[1] *cf.* J. S. Mill's witness in 1840: ' The name of Coleridge is one of the few English names of our time which are likely to be oftener pronounced, and to become symbolical of more important things, in proportion as the inward workings of the age manifest themselves more and more in outward facts. Bentham excepted, no Englishman of recent date has left his impress so deeply in the opinions and mental tendencies of those who attempt to enlighten their practice by philosophical meditation.' *Dissertations and Discussions*, Vol. I. ' Coleridge.'

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it seems clear to me that no head of study that involves discussions of Coleridge's indebtedness to, or independence of, Kant, Schelling, the Schlegels or Fichte has any claims on the attention of the literary student; it is from his point of view a solicitation to unprofitable expenditures. If in a work recommended to him as directly relevant to the problems of literary criticism any such solicitations seem likely to engage or confuse him he had better be warned against them. It follows then, if this is so, and if J. Shawcross's introduction is relevant to the work it precedes, that the docile student ought certainly to be warned against a large part of *Biographia Literaria*. It may be that, as Shawcross suggests, 'Coleridge's philosophy of art' has not 'received in England the consideration which it deserves.' But Coleridge's philosophy of art is Coleridge's philosophy, and though no doubt he has an important place in the history of English thought, not even the student of philosophy, I imagine, is commonly sent to Coleridge for initiations into key-problems, or for classical examples of distinguished thinking. And the literary student who goes to Coleridge in the expectation of bringing away an improved capacity and equipment for dealing critically with works of literature will, if he spends much time on the 'philosophy of art,' have been sadly misled.

It is by way of defining the spirit of my approach that I assert this proposition, the truth of which seems to me evident. Actually, of course, its evidence gets substantial recognition in established academic practice: the student usually starts his reading—or at least his serious reading—of *Biographia Literaria* at chapter XIV. Nevertheless, since the appropriate distinction is not formulated and no sharp separation can be made in the text, the common effect of the perusal can hardly be clarity—or clear profit. It is certain, on the other hand, that Coleridge's prestige owes a great deal to the transcendental aura; his acceptance as a master of 'theoretical criticism' is largely an awed vagueness about the philosophy—a matter of confused response to such things as

> 'The primary IMAGINATION then, I consider, to be the living power and prime agent of all human Perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM.'

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The essential distinction ought to be plain enough to us, but that Coleridge himself should not have made it sharply and have held firmly to it cannot, given the nature of his genius, surprise us ; on the contrary, even if he had been a much more orderly and disciplined worker than he was we still couldn't have expected in his work a clear separation between what properly claims the attention of the literary critic and what does not. ' Metaphysics, poetry and facts of mind,' he wrote, ' are my darling studies.' The collocation of the last two heads suggest the sense in which Shelley's phrase for him, ' a subtle-souled psychologist,' must often, when he impresses us favourably in the literary-critical field, seem to us an apt one, and, on the other hand, it is difficult not to think of the first head as a nuisance. Yet we can hardly suppose that we could have had the psychologist without the metaphysician ; that the gift of subtle analysis could have been developed, at that date, by a mind that shouldn't also have exhibited something like the Coleridgean philosophic bent. But that makes it not less, but more necessary to be firm about the distinction that concerns us here.

I had better at this point indicate more fully the specific equipment that might seem to have qualified Coleridge for great achievements in literary criticism—to be, indeed, its modern instaurator. The ' subtle-souled psychologist,' it seems not superfluous to emphasize, was intensely interested in literature. He was, of course, a poet, and the suggestion seems to be taken very seriously that he indulged the habit of analytic introspection to the extent of damaging the creative gift he turned it upon. However that may be, it is reasonable to suppose that the critic, at any rate, profited. The psychological bent was associated with an interest in language that expresses itself in observations such as lend colour to I. A. Richards's enlistment of Coleridge for Semasiology. But, as in reviewing in these pages *Coleridge on Imagination* I had occasion to remind Dr. Richards, who lays stress on those of Coleridge's interests which might seem to fall outside the compass of the literary critic, these interests went, in Coleridge, with a constant wide and intense cultivation of literature:

> ' O ! when I think of the inexhaustible mine of virgin treasure in our Shakespeare, that I have been almost daily reading him since I was ten years old—that the thirty intervening years have been unintermittingly and not fruitlessly employed in the

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study of the Greek, Latin, English, Italian, Spanish and German *belle lettrists*, and the last fifteen years in addition, far more intensively in the analysis of the laws of life and reason as they exist in man—and that upon every step I have made forward in taste, in acquisition of facts from history or my own observation, and in knowledge of the different laws of being and their apparent exceptions from accidental collision of disturbing forces,—that at every new accession of information, after every successful exercise of meditation, and every fresh presentation of experience, I have unfailingly discovered a proportionate increase of wisdom and intuition in Shakespeare . . . '.[2]

The ' analysis ' and the ' laws ' mentioned hardly belong to literary criticism, but it is easy to assemble an impressive array of characteristic utterances and formulas that promise the literary critic's own concern with principle:

' The ultimate end of criticism is much more to establish the principles of writing than to furnish *rules* how to pass judgment on what has been written by others ; if indeed it were possible that the two should be separated.' [*Biographia Lit.* c.XVIII].

' You will see, by the terms of my prospectus, that I intend my lectures to be, not only " in illustration of the principles of poetry," but to include a statement of the application of those principles, " as grounds of criticism on the most popular works of later English poets, those of the living included." ' [*Coleridge's Shakespearean Criticism, II*, p. 63].

' It is a painful truth that not only individuals, but even whole nations, are ofttimes so enslaved to the habits of their education and immediate circumstances, as not to judge disinterestedly even on those subjects, the very pleasure arising from which consists in its disinterestedness, namely, on subjects of taste and polite literature. Instead of deciding concerning their own modes and customs by any rule of reason, nothing appears rational, becoming, or beautiful to them, but what

[2]I quote from the Everyman volume, *Essays and Lectures on Shakespeare*, but see T. H. Raysor, *Coleridge's Shakespearean Criticism*, Vol. I, p. 210.

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coincides with the peculiarities of their education. In this narrow circle, individuals may attain to exquisite discrimination, as the French critics have done in their own literature ; but a true critic can no more be such without placing himself on some central point, from which he may command the whole, that is, some general rule, which, founded in reason, or the faculties common to all men, must therefore apply to each—than an astronomer can explain the movements of the solar system, without taking his stand in the sun. And let me remark, that this will not tend to produce despotism, but, on the contrary, true tolerance, in the critic.' [See Raysor, *Coleridge's Shakespearean Criticism*, Vol. I, p. 221].

These things seem the more significant for being thrown out by the way, suggesting a radical habit of mind, the literary critic's concern to ' ériger en lois '—his proper concern with the formulation of principle. They add greatly to the impressiveness of the account that can be elaborated of Coleridge's qualifications for a great achievement in criticism. My own experience is that one can easily fill a lecture on Coleridge with such an account, and that the impressiveness of the qualifications has a large part in one's impression of a great achievement. The qualifications are obvious, but the achievement isn't readily sized up.

What, in fact, can be said of it after a resolute critical survey? Asked to point to a place that could be regarded as at the centre of Coleridge's achievement and indicative of its nature, most admirers would probably point to the famous passage on imagination at the end of chapter XIV of *Biographia Literaria*:

> ' The poet, described in *ideal* perfection, brings the whole soul of man into activity, with the subordination of its faculties to each other, according to their relative worth and dignity. He diffuses a tone and spirit of unity, that blends, and (as it were) *fuses*, each into each, by that synthetic and magical power, to which we have exclusively appropriated the name of imagination. This power, first put into action by the will and understanding, and retained under their irremissive, though gentle and unnoticed, control (*laxis effertur habenis*) reveals itself in the balance or reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities: of sameness, with difference ; of the general, with the concrete ;

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> the idea, with the image ; the individual, with the representative ; the sense of novelty and freshness, with old and familiar objects ; a more than usual state of emotion with more than usual order ; judgment ever awake and steady self-possession, with enthusiasm and feeling profound or vehement ; and while it blends and harmonizes the natural and the artificial, still subordinates art to nature ; the manner to the matter ; and our admiration of the poet to our sympathy with the poetry.'

It is an impressive passage—perhaps too impressive ; for it has more often, perhaps, caused an excited sense of enlightenment than it has led to improved critical practice or understanding. The value we set on it must depend on the development and illustration the account of imagination gets in such context as we can find for it elsewhere in Coleridge and especially in his own critical practice. The appropriate commentary according to general acceptance would, I suppose, bear on the substitution by Coleridge of an understanding of literature in terms of organism, an understanding operating through an inward critical analysis, for the external mechanical approach of the Neo-classic eighteenth century. That Coleridge has a place in literary history to be indicated in some such terms is no doubt true. And yet we ought hardly to acquiesce happily in any suggestion that the subsequent century exhibits a general improvement in criticism. What in fact this view—the academically accepted one, I believe—of Coleridge amounts to is that, of the decisive change in taste and literary tradition that resulted from the Romantic movement, Coleridge is to be regarded as the supreme critical representative.[3]

And it has to be recognized that, in effect, his ' imagination ' does seem to have amounted to the Romantic 'creative imagination.' This much, at any rate, must be conceded: that, though justice insists that Coleridge's account of the creative process is not that given by Shelley in his *Defence of Poetry*, nevertheless Coleridge's

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[3] *cf.* Mill: ' The healthier taste and more intelligent canons of poetic criticism, which he was himself mainly instrumental in diffusing, have at length assigned to him his proper rank, as one among the great, and (if we look to the powers shown rather to the amount of actual achievement) amongst the greater names in our literature.'

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influence did not, in the subsequent century, avail to make the Romantic tradition, of which he was an acclaimed founding father, aware of the difference. From whom, for instance, does that ' soul ' descend in which, according to Arnold (who—and it is one of his claims to honour—was much less satisfied than Coleridge with the notion of poetry as the product of the inspired individual), ' genuine poetry ' was ' conceived and composed'? Arnold can hardly be said to have favoured Shelleyan notions, and yet, if we conclude that it descends from the soul ' brought into activity ' by the poet who is described in chapter XIV of *Biographia Literaria*, we are hardly recommending Coleridge.

In any case, Coleridge's historical importance isn't at the centre of my concern. My concern is with the intrinsic interest of his extant critical work—with his achievement in that sense. A critic may have an important place in history and yet not be very interesting in his writings: Dryden seems to me a case in point. Coleridge, on the other hand, may be more interesting than the claims made for him as an influence suggest. What credit we give him for the interesting possibilities of that passage on imagination depends, as has been said, on the way the account is developed and illustrated.

The Fancy-Imagination contrast hardly takes us any further. Coleridge does little with it beyond the brief exemplification that cannot be said to justify the stress he lays on the two faculties he distinguishes. I. A. Richards's attempt in *Coleridge on Imagination* to develop the distinction is a tribute not to Coleridge but to Bentham. The best that can be said for Coleridge is that, though he was undoubtedly serious in positing the two faculties, actually the distinction as he illustrates it is a way of calling attention to the organic complexities of verbal life, metaphorical and other, in which Imagination manifests itself locally: Fancy is merely an ancillary concept. And Coleridge certainly gives evidence of a gift for critical analysis:

> ' Look! how a bright star shooteth from the sky;
> So glides he in the night from Venus' eye!

How many images and feelings are here brought together without effort and without discord, in the beauty of Adonis, the rapidity of his flight, the yearning, yet hopelessness, of the enamoured

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gazer, while a shadowy ideal character is thrown over the whole.' [See *Coleridge's Shakespearean Criticism*, Vol. I, p. 213].

A good many passages of this kind could be quoted, showing a capacity for a kind of sensitive analytic penetration such as will hardly be found in any earlier critic.

But ' capacity '—again it is evidence of qualifications we are adducing. What corresponding achievement is there to point to? The work on Shakespeare constitutes the nearest thing to an impressive body of criticism, and everyone who has tried to read it through knows how disappointing it is. Coleridge didn't inaugurate what may be called the Bradley approach but he lends his prestige to it. Of course, his psychologizing is pursued with nothing of Bradley's system—he never carries through anything with system. On the other hand he has things to offer that are beyond Bradley's range. The subtle-souled psychologist appears to advantage, for example, in the analysis, if not of Hamlet's character, of the effects, at once poetic and dramatic, of the opening of the play. There are various notes of that kind and a good many acute observations about points in the verse. In short, when we take stock of what there is to be said in favour of the Shakespeare criticism, we again find ourselves considering, not achievement, but evidence of a critical endowment that *ought* to have achieved something remarkable. Even those who rate it more highly would, I imagine, never think of proposing the work on Shakespeare to the student as a classical body of criticism calculated to make much difference to his powers of appreciation or understanding.

What is, I suppose, a classical document is the group of chapters on Wordsworth in *Biographia Literaria*. But if they are that it is at least partly for reasons of historical interest, because Coleridge on Wordsworth is Coleridge on Wordsworth, and not because of achieved criticism of a high order contained in them. The treatment of the poetry, however interesting, hardly amounts to a profound or very illuminating critique. The discussion of poetic diction provides, of course, more evidence of Coleridge's peculiar gifts, especially in the argument about metre in chapter XVIII. That Coleridge perceives certain essential truths about poetic rhythm and metre—truths that are not yet commonplaces, at any rate in academic literary study—is plain. But anything approaching the satisfactory treatment of them that he seems pre-

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eminently qualified to have written he certainly doesn't provide. His virtue is represented by this:

> ' Secondly, I argue from the EFFECTS of metre. As far as metre acts in and for itself, it tends to increase the vivacity and susceptibility both of the general feelings and of the attention. This effect it produces by the continued excitement of surprise, and by the quick reciprocations of curiosity still gratified and still re-excited, which are too slight indeed to be at any one moment objects of distinct consciousness, yet become considerable in their aggregate influence. As a medicated atmosphere, or as wine during animated conversation ; they act powerfully, though themselves unnoticed. Where, therefore, correspondent food and appropriate matter are not provided for the attention and feelings thus aroused, there must needs be a disappointment felt ; like that of leaping in the dark from the last step of a staircase, when we had prepared our muscles for a leap of three or four.'

This fairly earns the tribute that I. A. Richards pays Coleridge in *The Principles of Literary Criticism*, in the chapter on ' Rhythm and Metre ' (one of the useful parts of that book). But though the paragraph quoted tends to confer credit upon the context of technical-looking analysis, it doesn't really gain anything from that context, the rigorously and ambitiously analytic air of which doesn't justify itself, despite an element of interesting suggestion.

And this seems the moment to make the point that Coleridge's unsatisfactoriness isn't merely what stares at us in the synopsis of *Biographia Literaria*—the disorderliness, the lack of all organization or sustained development: locally too, even in the best places, he fails to bring his thought to a sharp edge and seems too content with easy expression. Expression came, in fact, too easily to him ; for a man of his deep constitutional disinclination to brace himself to sustained work at any given undertaking, his articulateness was fatal. He could go down to the lecture-hall at the last minute with a marked copy of Shakespeare and talk—talk much as he talked anywhere and at any time. And what we read as Coleridge's writings comes from that inveterate talker, even when the text that we have is something he actually wrote, and not reported discourse.

Perhaps the habit of the lecture-hall accounts for such things as the definition of a poem in chapter XIV of *Biographia Literaria*:

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> ' The final definition then, so deduced, may be thus worded. A poem is that species of composition, which is opposed to works of science, by proposing for its immediate object pleasure, not truth ; and from all other species (having *this* object in common with it) it is discriminated by proposing to itself such delight from the *whole*, as is compatible with a distinct gratification from each component *part*.'

That, I am afraid, is representative of a good deal in Coleridge, though it seems to me quite unprofitable. And at the end of the same chapter is this well-known pronouncement:

> ' Finally, GOOD SENSE is the BODY of poetic genius, FANCY is its DRAPERY, MOTION its LIFE, and IMAGINATION the SOUL that is everywhere, and in each ; and forms all into one graceful and intelligent whole.'

It comes, characteristically enough, just after the famous passage on imagination, which is of another order altogether.

The immediately succeeding chapter (XV) seems to me to show Coleridge at his best. It is headed, ' The specific symptoms of poetic power elucidated in a critical analysis of Shakespeare's Venus and Adonis and Lucrece,' and this heading is significant: it suggests with some felicity the nature of Coleridge's peculiar distinction, or what should have been his peculiar distinction, as a critic. He speaks in his first sentence, referring no doubt mainly to the passage on imagination, of ' the application of these principles to purposes of practical criticism.' Actually, principle as we are aware of it here appears to emerge from practice ; we are made to realize that the ' master of theoretical criticism ' who matters is the completion of a practical critic. The theory of which he is master (in so far as he is) doesn't lead us to discuss his debt to Kant or any other philosopher ; it comes too evidently from the English critic who has devoted his finest powers of sensibility and intelligence to the poetry of his own language.

This commentary is prompted by, specifically, the second head of the chapter:

> 'A second promise of genius is the choice of subjects very remote from the private interests and circumstances of the writer himself. At least I have found that, where the subject is taken

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immediately from the author's personal sensations and experiences, the excellence of a particular poem is but an equivocal mark, and often a fallacious pledge, of genuine poetic power.'

The general considerations raised are immediately relevant to that central theme of T. S. Eliot's criticism, impersonality. But they are presented in terms of particular analysis, and the whole passage is a fine piece of practical criticism:

'In the "Venus and Adonis" this proof of poetic power exists even to excess. It is throughout as if a superior spirit more intuitive, more intimately conscious, even than the characters themselves, not only of every outward look and act, but of the flux and reflux of the mind in all its subtlest thoughts and feelings, were placing the whole before our view; himself meanwhile unparticipating in the passions, and actuated only by that pleasurable excitement, which had resulted from the energetic fervour of his own spirit in so vividly exhibiting, what it had so accurately and profundly contemplated. I think, I should have conjectured from these poems, that even then the great instinct, which impelled the poet to the drama, was secretly working in him, prompting him by a series and never broken chain of imagery always vivid and, because unbroken, often minute; by the highest effort of the picturesque in words, of which words are capable, higher perhaps than was ever realized by any other poet, even Dante not excepted; to provide a substitute for that visual language, that constant intervention and running comment by tone, look and gesture, which in his dramatic works he was entitled to expect from the players. His "Venus and Adonis" seem at once the characters themselves, and the whole representation of those characters by the most consummate actors. You seem to be told nothing but to see and hear everything. Hence it is, that from the perpetual activity of attention required on the part of the reader; from the rapid flow, the quick change, and the playful nature of the thoughts and images; and above all from the alienation, and, if I may hazard such an expression, the utter *aloofness* of the poet's own feelings from those of which he is at once the painter and the analyst; that though the very subject cannot but detract from the pleasure of a delicate mind,

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yet never was poem less dangerous on a moral account. Instead of doing as Ariosto, and as, still more offensively, Wieland has done, instead of degrading and deforming passion into appetite, the trials of love into the struggles of concupiscence ; Shakespeare has here represented the animal impulse itself, so as to preclude all sympathy with it, by dissipating the reader's notice among the thousand outward images, and now beautiful, now fanciful circumstances, which form its dresses and its scenery ; or by diverting our attention from the main subject by those frequent witty or profound reflections, which the poet's ever active mind had deduced from, or connected with, the imagery and the incidents. The reader is forced into too much action to sympathize with the merely passive of our nature. As little can a mind thus roused and awakened be brooded on by mean and indistinct emotion, as the low, lazy mist can creep upon the surface of a lake, while a strong gale is driving it onward in waves and billows.'

It will have been seen that, incidentally, in the sentence about 'the perpetual activity of attention required on the part of the reader' and the further observations about the ' action ' into which the reader is forced, Coleridge has given an account of the element of ' wit ' that is in *Venus and Adonis*.

Though the other heads of the chapter contain nothing as striking, we tend to give full credit to what is best in them. In the first and third, for instance, Coleridge makes it plain (as he has already done in practical criticism) that the ' imagery ' that matters cannot be dealt with in terms of ' images ' conceived as standing to the verse as plums to cake ; but that its analysis is the analysis of complex verbal organization :

' It has therefore been observed that images, however beautiful, though faithfully copied from nature, and as accurately represented in words, do not of themselves characterize the poet. They become proofs of original genius only as far as they are modified by a predominant passion ; or by associated thoughts or images awakened by that passion ; or when they have the effect of reducing multitude to unity, or succession to an instant ; or lastly, when a human and intellectual life is transferred to them from the poet's own spirit.'

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But there would be little point in further quotations of this kind. Such imperfectly formulated things hardly deserve to be remembered as classical statements, and nothing more is to be adduced by way of justifying achievement than the preceding long quotation. And there is nowhere in Coleridge anything more impressive to be found than that. We are left, then, with the conclusion that what we bring from the re-survey of his critical work is impressive evidence of what he might have done.

A great deal more space, of course, could be occupied with this evidence. Some of the most interesting is to be found in *Coleridge's Miscellaneous Criticism* (T. H. Raysor's collection) where, in the form of marginalia, odd notes, table talk and so on, there are many striking judgments and observations. There are, for instance, the pages (131 ff.) on Donne—pages that incline one to comment that if Coleridge had had real influence the vogue of Donne would have started a century earlier than it did. (Of Satire III, *e.g.*, he says: 'If you would teach a scholar in the highest form how to *read*, take Donne, and of Donne this satire.'). He is sound on Beaumont and Fletcher: 'Beaumont and Fletcher write as if virtue or goodness were a sort of talisman or strange something that might be lost without the least fault on the part of the owner'—and he refers to 'the too poematic-minus-dramatic nature' of Fletcher's versification. He is good on Swift: 'In short, critics in general complain of the Yahoos; I complain of the Houyhnhnms.' He is acutely severe on Scott. In fact, the volume as a whole repays exploration. Elsewhere there are the various notes on dramatic and poetic illusion, of which those in *Coleridge's Shakespearean Criticism*, Vol. I (pp. 199 ff.) should be looked up, though the best-known formulation, 'that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith,' occurs in *Biographia Literaria* (c. XIV).

But to revert to the depressing conclusion: Coleridge's prestige is very understandable, but his currency as an academic classic is something of a scandal. Where he is prescribed and recommended it should be with far more by way of reservation and caveat (I have come tardily to realize) than most students can report to have received along with him. He was very much more brilliantly gifted than Arnold, but nothing of his deserves the classical status of Arnold's best work.

F. R. LEAVIS.

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COMMENTS AND REVIEWS

RETROSPECT OF A DECADE

In opening our ninth year at such a time as this, the mere bringing out of the new issue, with the implied intention to carry on while that remains possible, seems manifesto enough. The importance of the function that *Scrutiny*, in its own necessarily modest way, exists to serve is to-day generally granted. Eight years ago, we recall, things were different. The purpose of *Scrutiny*, as we conceived it, was plainly enough set forth in the first issue, but that didn't inhibit the chorused and reiterated 'Show your colours!' There was a simple choice to be made, and not to make it and proclaim it was to be guilty of pusillanimity. We remember as representative of the prevailing assumptions and indicative of the pressure of the environment at that time, this comment on our 'political attitude,' made with malicious intent by an eminent young intellectual: 'Well, of course, you're as little Communist as you dare be.'

The assumption that not to be Communist required courage was at that time a natural one. The pressure was certainly tremendous—to wear red, or some colour recognized as its opposite. But that had been a reason for starting *Scrutiny*, and could only be one for continuing to feel that the undertaking was worth persisting with. There was never, as a matter of fact, any hesitation or inexplicitness about our anti-Marxism, this negative being a corollary of our positive position. And our positive position was that, though without doubt the human spirit was not to be thought of as expressing itself in a void of 'freedom,' unconditioned by economic and material circumstances, nevertheless there was a great need to insist on the element of autonomy and to work for the preservation of the humane tradition—a tradition representing the profit of a continuity of experience through centuries of economic and material change. Further, it was an essential part of our position, as we conceived it, *not* to be as positive as some people—possible sympathizers—would desire: we intended *Scrutiny* to stand for the humane tradition as something to be fostered apart from any particular religious creed; and the fostering of a free play of critical intelligence we thought of as essential to the tradition. In this sense *Scrutiny* invites the description 'liberal.'

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Such a position could hardly be stigmatized as Fascist. But we got a good deal of free advertisement in young-intellectual organs, which used to attack *Scrutiny* for ' playing into the enemy's hands ' by encouraging ' irresponsibility ' in the intelligent young and distracting from a clear perception of the clear-cut issues. As the decade wore on we got less advertisement of this kind: Marxist intellectuals became more and more occupied with explaining that Marxist criticism was not what in these attacks it had very militantly represented itself to be. And then, of course, quite recently the Marxist decade came to its sharp close: that chapter ended before the chronological period was quite out.

But Marxist the decade decidedly was. It was also, in literature, as a reviewer in the following pages notes, a very barren decade. Compare it with the nineteen-twenties. The nineteen-twenties were the decade of Joyce, Eliot, D. H. Lawrence, Virginia Woolf, E. M. Forster, T. F. Powys, the effective publication of *Mauberley*, the discovery of Hopkins and the advent of Yeats as a major poet. The nineteen-thirties started with a Poetic Renascence. Now at their close one is driven to judge that the making accessible of Isaac Rosenberg (who has not yet been ' discovered,' in spite of his great superiority in interest over Wilfrid Owen) was a more important event in English poetry than any emergence of a new poet. In the novel there was *The Root and the Flower* ; but what else is there to mention—at any rate, of cis-Atlantic origin?

The prevalent Marxizing and the barrenness might well seem to be in obviously significant relation, Marxist doctrines about literature and art being what they are. But it would, of course, be unsubtle to insist much on the suggestion of simple cause-and-effect. If the young intelligentsia yielded so readily to the satisfactions of an easy salvationism, explanations may no doubt be reasonably looked for in the menacing state of the world. Politico-economic problems filled the prospect, and unless you supposed you knew of a very simple solution, you could hardly suppose you knew of one at all. Certainly, the kind of political distraction that characterized the decade was very bad for creative work.

But there is one aspect of the unfavourable state of civilization that especially concerns *Scrutiny* and its specific function. In all ages, no doubt, there have been cliques and coteries, and young

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writers have founded mutual admiration societies and done their best to make these coincident with the literary world—the world that determines current valuations. But has there ever before been a time when the young aspirant, graduating from his university group, could immediately and without any notable sense of a change find himself in a fraternity that effectively 'ran' contemporary letters—'ran' them so effectively that he could make a name and a career without even coming in sight of adult standards? The existence of such a state of affairs will be found amply recorded and documented in the eight volumes of *Scrutiny*. The disastrous consequence may be pointed to in the representative career of W. H. Auden, distinguished by his promise at the beginning of the decade.

No one would expect reminders of the nature of standards to be received with gratitude. It seems worth noting, however, in further illustration of the decade, that a little research in back-files will reveal the young, predominantly Left-inclined, *élite* incongruously cocking their snooks at *Scrutiny* from the pages of *The Criterion*—the only attention *Scrutiny* ever got in that promisingly-styled organ. It may perhaps be permissible to record too that, because of such performances there, where we had once looked for judicial criticism by more philosophical standards than ours, we have on occasion thought it necessary to abstain from reviewing books that certainly ought otherwise to have been reviewed: we were anxious not to give the least colour of countenance to the prevailing gang-warfare notion of critical exchange. But to have to confess failure to that extent was a disappointment, for without a serious critical interplay there can hardly be said to be the beginning of a functioning contemporary criticism.

On the other hand we feel that the history of the decade has justified the intentions with which we started. And, conscious as we are of many inadequacies, it would be dishonest to pretend that, so far as one organ can hope to maintain the function of criticism, *Scrutiny* appears to us, when we turn over the back volumes, to have fallen discreditably short in its attempt at maintaining it. Moreover, to have brought and kept together something of an intellectual community, however small, seems to us to have been worth the labour. We shall carry on while we can.

F.R.L.

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'NEW WRITING' IN THE 1930's

FOLIOS OF NEW WRITING, Spring, 1940 (Hogarth, 5/-).

New Writing, which announced its own death in the Christmas number, has reappeared under a modified title. ' The critics,' we are told, ' did not want *New Writing* to die,' and indeed the chorus of praise is impressively unanimous, ranging from *The New Statesman* to Sir Hugh Walpole in *The Star*, and from *The Cape Times* to *The Canadian Forum*. The occasion seems appropriate for a brief examination of these claims.

New Writing has set out 'to create a laboratory where the writers of the future may experiment, and where the literary movement may find itself.' From the first it opened its pages to more tentative and experimental work than could obtain publication in the ordinary magazines, and until Autumn, 1938, it excluded criticism. It claimed to be ' first and foremost interested in literature ' and independent of any political party, though it refused writers of reactionary or Fascist sentiments. In practice it was from the start an organ of the Left, and the great amount of purely documentary work showed that literature was not its chief concern. Some of this documentary work had considerable interest in itself. But the mere reporting of fragments of experience unrelated to any comprehensive scheme of values can hardly provide more than raw material for the artist, who is committed to the task of clarifying and ordering his experience. When, on the other hand, these writers attempt to do more than record the flux of events, they usually assume a simple framework of Marxian beliefs as the supreme and all-inclusive wisdom. The literary critic will look for some concrete embodiment of this wisdom, and he is not likely to discover it. He will find a certain amount of impartial reporting which may prove a salutary challenge to his own beliefs (though many of these chronicles of oppression, murder and rape show signs of hysteria and sentimentality) and a good deal of propaganda only too obviously written to a theory (especially among the translations). It is still necessary to repeat that over-simplification and the omission of aspects of experience which do not fit can only impoverish the quality of writing.

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The contributions have always been best when least ambitious. Propagandists who follow the fashionable literary cults—surrealism, psycho-analytic allegory, the exploitation of private jokes and neuroses—usually become intolerably pretentious while remaining essentially immature. Typical examples are the novels by Edward Upward and Rex Warner which were reviewed in *Scrutiny* for June, 1938: sections of these and other similar works first appeared in *New Writing*. Apart from translations, proletarian stories and documentary sketches, the new literary movement means the old firm—Isherwood, Auden, Spender, Day Lewis, Macneice, Charles Madge, George Barker and the rest. *Scrutiny* has criticized these writers individually and it is only necessary here to repeat the general charge that their pretentiousness, their monotonous repetition of technical tricks and their lack of real substance largely arise from the absence of a healthy critical environment. We have noted that criticism was excluded from the early numbers of *New Writing*: when it did make its appearance in 1938 it showed all the muddle of books like *The Mind in Chains*. The best article is Mr. Rickword's not very convincing essay on André Malraux (Autumn, 1938), but Mr. Swingler's *History and the Poet* (Christmas, 1939) represents the more usual level. It tells us naïvely that Marxist criticism doesn't necessarily object to poetry concerned with love, personal relations and natural scenery—that in fact, there is room for Mr. Auden and Mr. Spender as well as John Cornford. When the published criticism shows so little power of discrimination, we are not surprised to find the general contents of *New Writing* undistinguished.

The new number, *Folios of New Writing*, is a somewhat less interesting version of the mixture as before. The general impression of the fragmentary and ineffectual is intensified. The best contribution seems to me to be André Chamson's *A Liaison Officer's Notebook*, and that is after all nothing more than a few sensitive reflections on the War. Henry Green's *A Private School in 1914* is like most other descriptions of prep-schools except that the author cultivates an irritating *faux-simple* manner and interpolates occasional comparisons with the modern world in a vein of heavy irony. H. T. Hopkinson's *Trailing Clouds of Glory* (a public-house scene) is an unsuccessful imitation of the irony of Mr. Eliot's Sweeney poems. John Sommerfield contributes a half-symbolic

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story, crude in its generalized propaganda, describing a boy's initiation into class-conflict and Fascist brutality. Mr. G. F. Green's study of the psychological state of an unemployed man gains nothing from its rather melodramatic drowning accident, and Mr. Elwell-Sutton's account of an Army deserter is a simple recital of tragic fact unillumined by any special insight of the author's. Miss Rosamund Lehmann's long story has no more excuse than the creation of ' characters ' at the Book-Society level, except for a few faint echoes of Mr. Forster's earlier work. The verse ranges from Mr. Moore's platitudes dressed up in modern technique to Mr. Tiller's would-be Yeatsian romanticism, from Mr. Gascoyne's pretentious ruminations on *The Writer's Hand* to Mr. Spender's up-to-date rendering of the moral of Browning's *The Statue and the Bust*. Mr. Plomer's ballad is in Auden's sillier serio-comic manner: I can't imagine what significance it is supposed to possess. George Barker's prose *Letter to History*, which concludes the volume, is a medley of sheer nonsense, a deliberate indulgence in mental chaos in the late Majorcan manner.

The most depressing thing about *New Writing* is its nullity. All this experiment seems to have thrown up no work of any real distinction. The ' poetical renaissance,' which began with the publication of Auden's best work in 1930, has petered out in vapid mannerisms and stale clichés. Altogether one is forced to the conclusion that the 'thirties were an unusually barren period in English literature. In the previous decade there were at work Yeats, Lawrence, Mr. Eliot, Mrs. Woolf, Mr. Forster, Mr. T. F. Powys—to take only a few obvious names. Whatever the faults of these writers, do the critics who so cry up *New Writing* seriously suggest that the new movement can point to any comparable work? ' The Yellow Book of the 'thirties ' says *The Listener*—well, perhaps ; but when *Time and Tide* speaks of ' the healthiest literary development since the Romantic Revival ' the collapse of critical standards must be plain to all who are not blinded by partisanship.

R. G. Cox.

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THE BARD AND THE PREP-SCHOOL

PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS A YOUNG DOG, by Dylan Thomas (*Dent, 7/6*).

THE BACKWARD SON, a novel by Stephen Spender (*Faber and Faber, 7/6*).

The work of Dylan Thomas apparently appeals strongly to our contemporary poets. Miss Edith Sitwell (as his publishers announce persistently) wrote of Thomas's first volume: 'A new poet has arisen who shows every promise of greatness. His work is on a huge scale both in theme and structurally, and the form of many of his poems is superb . . . Here alone among the poets of the younger generation is one who could produce sonnets worthy of our great heritage': while Mr. Clifford Dyment thought his prose 'as individual as his poetry, rich in image and metaphor, sometimes as dark as a storm, sometimes as gentle as April sunlight.'

Those of us who don't profess to be so poetically creative would like to ask if within all this hugeness and superbness and this abundance of stormy gestures there is a solid core, the experience created, the emotion felt and realized. We should find the answer to our query, if anywhere, in the 'young poet's' autobiography, for here he may justifiably present his case without equivocation and without evasions. Let us consider, then, what virtues the curious eye may glean from a perusal of these autobiographical pages.

There is, this much is presented to us perhaps too forcibly, a gift for the Trenchant Phrase:

> 'Gwilym was a tall young man aged nearly twenty, with a thin stick of a body and a spade-shaped face. You could dig the garden with him.'

There is too, a knack of expressive rhythm:

> 'Mrs. Williams was tall and stout, with a jutting bosom and thick legs, her ankles swollen over her pointed shoes; she was fitted out like a mayoress or a ship, and she swayed after Annie into the best room.'

It is, you see, not only in the images but in the rhythm too, a technique of perpetual exaggeration, almost of distortion. The

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objection to it is that, if adopted as a norm, its effectiveness vanishes. One's capacity for being surprised is strictly limited, and only the immaturity of adolescence would fail to realize that such truculent naïveté, such continual bludgeoning of the reader's responsiveness, must inevitably defeat its own ends. When Mr. Thomas confines himself to a caricature-like exposition of crude experiences of physical violence,

> ' Then Uncle Jim came in like the devil with a red face and a wet nose and trembling, heavy hands. His walk was thick. He stumbled against the dresser and shook the coronation plates, and a lean cat shot booted out from the settle corner,'

or of drunkenness and hysteria,

> ' Mr. Farr tapped me on the shoulder ; his hand fell from a great height and his thin bird's voice spoke from a whirring circle on the ceiling,'

or of the agonies of adolescence or of the nameless horrors of childhood,

> ' Up above, sat one-eyed, dead-eyed, sinister, slim, ten-notched Gwilym, loading his gun in Gallows Farm. We crawled and rat-tatted through the bushes, hid at a whistled signal and crouched there, waiting for the crack of a twig or the secret breaking of boughs,'

we can accept his rhetorical imagination as the serio-comic exuberance of a school-boy. But when he starts to generalize about these experiences it is more difficult to accept him as an adult.

In effecting this generalization Thomas dons the mantle of the distraught romantic genius, a mantle which the overgrown schoolboy is perhaps not unfamiliar with. His Welsh nonconformist background effectively sets off this posture in that it encourages the bardic gesture, the Dionysiac vision, the rapture of hell-fire. The literary parallel with Joyce's Irish-Catholic background is explicitly admitted in the parody title of Thomas's book, in the selection of the incidents described (we have the fanatic preacher, childhood fear of death and the flesh-creeping bogey, terror in the suburbs of sordidness and drunken hysteria in the precints of bars), even perhaps in the violent quality of the images

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and in certain rhythmical tricks of style. I do not deny that much of the later part of the autobiography (particularly the section called *One Warm Saturday*) is, if reminiscent, as authentic as the descriptions of childhood, but there is nonetheless something a little suspicious about the deliberation with which Thomas chooses his rôle. These anecdotes assume an attitude ; but artistically they are least unsatisfactory when they admit that they are utterly without point. The childhood section called *Extraordinary Little Cough* is successful—if its painful quality may properly be described as success—because it is content with the simplest statement of a sequence of events.

The trouble with Dylan Thomas grown up is that his interests—his terrors and raptures and desires—are identical with those of Dylan Thomas the child. Because he is in fact no longer a child he feels that he must needs falsify these fears and desires, must attribute to them an importance which they cannot properly pretend to. His writing then becomes pivoted on himself, an orgy of self-commiseration. He is the bard, the ' last romantic,' buffeted and maltreated by a despicable Fortune:

> 'And I never felt more a part of the remote and overpressing world, or more full of love and arrogance and pity and humility, not for myself alone but for the living earth I suffered on and for the unfeeling systems in the upper air . . . I mooched in a half-built house with the sky stuck in the roof and cats on ladders and a wind shaking through the bare bones of the bedrooms.'

So vaguely noble a statement of the pathetic fallacy sounds curiously old-fashioned, and prepares us for this transparent presentation of a jaded twentieth-century Byron:

> ' Outside all holiday, like a young man doomed for ever to the company of his maggots, beyond the power of the high or ordinary, sweating sun-awakened power and stupidity of the summer flesh on a day and a world out, he caught the ball that a small boy had whacked into the air with a tin tray, and rose to throw it back . . . The lone wolf playing ball,'

and for the *fin-de-siècle malaise* of the rhythmical swan-song of the concluding paragraphs:

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' Up the rotten, bruising, mountainous stairs he climbed, in his sickness, to the passage where he had left the one light burning in the end room. He tapped all the doors and whispered her name. He beat on the doors and shouted, and a woman, dressed in a vest and a hat, drove him out with a walking stick . . .

' Then he walked out of the house on to the waste space and under the leaning cranes and ladders. The light of the one weak lamp in a rusty circle fell across the brickheaps and the broken wood and the dust that had been houses once, where the small and hardly known and never-to-be-forgotten people of the dirty town had lived and loved and died and, always, lost.'

Of course this sort of thing is comparatively innocent, particularly since Thomas, with a kind of inverted conceit, laughs at himself for doing it. (' Did you see the dewdrops in her hair? Stop talking to the mirror like a man in a magazine.'). But the next step, that which presents Dylan Thomas as the god-given laureate mumbling his magic incantations to the spirit of Earth, is perhaps more vicious in that it stands, with its untrammeled genius that defies intelligibility, beyond criticism by all but those who are likewise ' inspired.' Inspiration may be convenient. The reader may be bamboozled into believing that so portentous a concern for one's own neuroses as Thomas manifests in the ' surrealist ' prose of *The Map of Love* must mean that those neuroses are intrinsically more interesting than the adolescent experiences described in the autobiography ; or that Thomas's incomprehensible poems must be more profound than his few comprehensible ones—such as *The hand that signed a paper felled a city*, which voices a sentiment admirable enough but in no wise startlingly original—might lead one to expect. The incantatory rhythm and amorphous images no doubt lull receptivity ; and in more ways than one Mr. Thomas reminds me of Swinburne. Certainly he would be an artist of the same ethos if he could—as he cannot except perhaps in his least pretentious moments—be called an artist at all.

On the first page of Mr. Spender's prep-school anecdotes we find this:

' The cat and dog, who were good friends, were playing in the garden. No one drove them out into the world, no one

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> beat them with rods, no one shut them up in class-rooms and made them learn lessons, no one forcibly introduced them to other cats and dogs who would probably do their best to tear them into pieces ' ;

after which we settle down to an unremitting wail. This book is singularly unambitious since although it is optimistically termed a novel it seems to recount the sadistic and masochistic details of its hero's ignominious suffering with painfully indiscriminate verisimilitude. Mr. Spender's publishers claim that the 'discoveries' he makes in the world of childhood are ' unique ' and that they ' add a new chapter of surprising richness to the imaginative history of his generation,' but it is very difficult to be surprised by either the newness or the richness of the prep-school theme and the pancake-flat mediocrity of the prose. As to whether Mr. Spender's vintage 1920 is more or less ' dated ' than Mr. D. T.'s vintage 1900 I wouldn't like to commit myself, but it is certainly duller and more inert. So may-be, relatively speaking, there's life in the young dog, yet.

W. H. MELLERS.

Mr. C. G. Hutchinson writes that T. R. Barnes's criticism, in his review of *Village Life and Labour*, that the bibliography ' shows no critical discrimination whatever ' should be modified in view of the following facts: (1) that his recommendation of ' a reading of the complete works of the men from whom etc.' was an error ; he had intended ' a reading of complete works by . . . etc.' ; (2) that the book (or the bibliography) was means for a wider audience than schools.

Babel : A Multi-Lingual Critical Review, is another gallant war-time enterprise. Like *The Music Review* (see *Scrutiny* for March last), it has reached its second issue. Edited by Peter G. Lucas, John Fleming, G. Gordon Mosely, with a number of assistants. Price 1/6. Bowes and Bowes, Cambridge.

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WHAT BOYS AND GIRLS READ

WHAT DO BOYS AND GIRLS READ? by A. J. Jenkinson (Methuen, 7/6).

This very interesting and valuable book is a statistical examination of what boys and girls between the ages of 11+ and 15+ in secondary schools, and 11+ and 14+ in senior schools really do read, both of their own free-will and at the behest of their teachers. Mr. Jenkinson's painstakingly analysed figures are based on answers to a questionnaire sent to 2900 children, a group large enough to be fairly representative: they will depress, though not, I think, unduly surprise, the reader. Indeed, he will probably find here what oft he thought, though ne'er so well saw tabulated.

The first thing that strikes one among the mass of facts here assembled, is the quantity of books read, at all ages, by all classes of pupils. Clearly, as the author remarks, there is no need to put the establishment of the reading habit among the aims of English teaching ; they have all got it quite badly enough already. The secondary school boy reads about five books a month on his own, his sister about six ; for the senior school the figures are slightly lower—about four and five respectively—and these are real books, magazines and bloods being counted separately.

Mr. Jenkinson's analysis of the changes of taste during four years of school life is fascinating, and his main conclusions about these changes he summarizes as follows: ' children of these ages (as of others) must pass through certain stages of development in order to pass beyond them ; adult tastes are imposed on children, and this is a mistake ; the really fruitful period in secondary (or post-primary education) is in the years *after* 15+ ; at these ages devotion to the cinema, to bloods, to newspaper reading, to childish or boyish reading of any kind is not reprehensible ; the reading matter . . . apart from that which is read for the information it contains, is of two main sorts ; that which promotes growing up, and that which compensates for the difficulties of growing up.'

He classifies the books read, as School Stories, Detective, Home Life, Adventure, Love, Historical, Collections (Annuals), and Technical ; and we can see how, for example, the taste for school stories lessens as the child grows older. At 12+ such books, among which the ' William ' stories are the most popular, account for

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14% of the secondary school boy's, and 22.3% of the secondary school girl's total reading matter ; but at 15+ the percentages have dropped to 5.3 and less than 5. A comparison with the figures for similar reading in senior schools is interesting. Between the ages of 12+ and 14+ the percentage for boys drops only from 12.2 to 11.5, and for girls from 24.9 to 23.2. From this and similar evidence Mr. Jenkinson concludes that the senior school child ' age for age is notably less mature than the secondary school child. Yet he is discharged . . . from all educational supervision and care, at least two years and often four years before his contemporary in the secondary school. This is not giving education to those who need it most.' And in a footnote he adds ' Of course it must be admitted that the objective of the state system of scholarships, of the educational ladder, is to give education to those who " deserve " it most, not to those who need it most. The concepts of " scarcity economics " prevail in education.' This quotation well illustrates the way in which Mr. Jenkinson continually relates his specialized subject matter to wider issues ; and it is perhaps worth while in passing to compare the implications of these remarks with that passage from one of the essays in *After Strange Gods* in which Mr. Eliot, pursuing his aim of calling in the old world to redress the balance of the new, and in his eagerness to withdraw the hem of the garment of education from the mud of liberalism, suggests that we don't want any more post-primary education, because our elementary system is not yet perfect. What we want of course is a great deal more money, and less nonsense about efficiency and examinations. It is in the interests of efficiency that the Spens report suggests the segregation of technical schools from those devoted to higher education. If by efficiency you mean competence in instilling the sort of knowledge that can be measured by the sort of examination we now suffer from, and all educational authorities, however high-minded their protestations, do mean precisely this, then the Spens report is justified: but this kind of efficiency can lead only to the increasing stratification of society which is stupidly enough split as it is. The possible bankruptcy of our Public School system will inevitably lead to an attempt to apply the leader class principle to secondary education, and this is apparent beween every line of the Spens report ; lamentings are heard i'the air, and birds of night do sit in the columns of the

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more respectable press, hooting and shrieking: it would be well worth sacrificing an efficiency which has no connection with true education, together with that odious adjective ' higher,' to prevent such an attempt.

There are many facts in this book which make one reflect on the connections between the present state of education and the general social and economic set-up. For instance, the prevalence of ' private reading ' in senior schools is shown to be due to the size of classes, and the fact that the teacher without free periods must find time to do many trivial clerical jobs, which, as a writer in the *Times Literary Supplement* has recently pointed out, he should never have to do at all. The selection of books for this private or guided reading is poor, because it is determined not by the teacher's plans, but by the poverty of his resources. Mr. Jenkinson believes that such guided reading might be of the greatest value, in giving the teacher a chance of personal and individual contact with the real tastes of his pupils. He finds, needless to say, that in secondary schools, such periods are in the later stages of the middle school boy's career, sacrificed to the needs of the approaching School Certificate. So, too, in the Secondary School, the middle forms study literature through the medium of the texts set for this examination, not because such texts are suited to their tastes or aptitudes, but because the school store is full of once-used, but still untattered sets, and they must not be wasted.

The modern boy is brought up in a biologically unsuitable environment, in which many of the natural outlets for his developing self are inadequate or non-existent ; like his elders he seeks refuge and compensation in literature ; and he is given a stock article standardized on the lowest level, purveyed by the same financial interests as cater for the grown-ups. Amalgamated Press, Ltd., a Berry Brothers combine, publishes eighteen children's Annuals, and thirty-four bloods and comics. Five out of six of the most widely read bloods, the *Wizard*, the *Hotspur*, the *Rover*, the *Skipper*, the *Adventure*, are published by one house ; and the way in which this firm knows its market is well indicated by the fact that these papers top the list at every age in both Senior and Secondary schools.

One of the most interesting examples of this connection between emotional demand and commercial supply, and one which well

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illustrates the impact of economic on educational problems, is the comparison between the reading of erotic bloods in girls' Secondary and girls' Senior Schools. The term ' erotic blood ' needs perhaps a word of explanation. ' They can,' says Mr. Jenkinson, ' most accurately be described as erotic magazines, and deal almost exclusively with the love fantasies of girls and young women.' Now the total number of bloods of all sorts read in a month decreases in Secondary Schools from two per girl at 12+, to 0.6 at 15+ ; in the Senior Schools it increases from 2.7 at the earlier age, to 4.2 at the later, and as most of these magazines are published weekly, the figures are really understatements. The erotic blood accounts, in the secondary school, for about 3% of all blood reading at all ages. In the Senior School the parallel figure is about 28%. The author's comments on this striking fact may be quoted at length ; they are typical of the way in which he discusses the problems raised by his analyses.

' Throughout the Senior School girl's short school life she is rapidly nearing a job. She is much closer to the task of earning a living than is her contemporary in a Secondary School, closer to what are often called the " hard realities of life." In this sense she can be described as more mature than the Secondary School girl ; but in other ways she certainly is not. Her experience tends to be more adult ; her intellectual and emotional development is, if other results of this investigation mean anything, less advanced than that of the contemporary Secondary School girl. Perhaps the Secondary School girl is too sheltered, too cut off, but it could hardly be urged that the exposure of the Senior School girl is altogether advantageous. There is no proof that these erotic magazines do harm ; it is unwarrantable to assume that they are " unhealthy " or " unwholesome." They probably provide quite valuable fantasy materials. But it is likely that the social and human values underlying them are shallow, opportunist, and ill-thought-out. They are one of the agencies that tend to stabilize popular feeling and insight at low levels. The Senior School girl goes out into a life which offers her little chance of growing beyond these values and standards.'

This seems to me to be most sensible, but to err, as Mr. Jenkinson's comments usually do, on the side of tolerance. It is not ' likely,' it is certain, that the ' social and human values ' of

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these publications ' are shallow, opportunist and ill-thought-out.' Moreover it is very doubtful whether the fantasy materials are ' quite valuable.' On the other hand, the view that he takes of bloods in general, that in gratifying ' appetites for certain kinds of reading the child is satisfying instinctive needs which he should be allowed to satisfy,' is sound. In any case, it is futile to forbid the fruit.

How many books does the Middle School child read upon compulsion? In a Secondary School he ' does ' (it is the only appropriate verb) about forty, in four years. The Senior School boy does twenty to twenty-five in half the time. It has already been pointed out that examination needs and lack of money profoundly influence, if not dictate, the choice of these books. But when one looks at the list of readers, anthologies, courses, and odd plays and volumes of essays catalogued here, all on such a miserable level of mediocre dullness, it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that other causes are also at work, and the teachers themselves partly to blame. In view of the facts assembled by Mr. Jenkinson, their laudably enthusiastic desire to introduce to their pupils the beauties of English Literature is seen to be psychologically unjustifiable ; but what is really more serious is that so many of them seem to think that such things as *Mount Helicon*, Essays by 'Alpha of the Plough,' and *The Call of the Homeland*, have anything to do with literature at all. The texts used are not only inappropriate for the boys' needs, but also second-rate when judged by adult standards.

It is impossible to summarize Mr. Jenkinson's recommendations fully, but briefly they are these: use novels more than any other form of literature (adult fiction accounts for over 15% of the total of all books read): a wide range of technical books should be made available ; what the boy wants is action and facts, not discussion, reflection, analysis, or argument: make private reading a regular practice, and use time thus spent to influence and guide growing and changing tastes: above all always start from, and be guided by, the boy's own natural appetites and interests ; read a few of the books he reads, see the films he sees, and work from his level.

Happy the teacher who has, under the present system, the time and the freedom to follow these suggestions.

T. R. BARNES.

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GREEK TRAGEDY

GREEK TRAGEDY, by H. D. F. Kitto (Methuen, 16/6).

This is a very useful book for the common reader of Greek tragedy. I have little doubt it is equally useful to the scholar, but I am quite unqualified to give an opinion on that point, and in any case Mr. Kitto presents his work as literary criticism and not as 'historical scholarship.' It is of course a book that only an extremely competent scholar could have written, but it is also one that it required much more than scholarship to write. Throughout, and in spite of certain longueurs and an occasional tendency to overwrite, it is plain that we are in contact with a mind determined to treat the plays as plays and to make them intelligible. We know already from the dust-cover that this is Mr. Kitto's aim, but it is one thing to have unexceptionable principles and another to live up to them, as he does.

A general point to begin with. In the preface Mr. Kitto refers to the usefulness of 'the form of Greek Tragedy' as a to 'that unreal figment "the form of Greek Tragedy"' as a principle of explanation, and when at the very end of the book he repeats much the same point in the form, 'there is no such thing as a typical Greek play' he has the right to feel that he has given the only possible demonstration of the contention—one consisting in a patient and sympathetic study of the individual plays. Perhaps the qualities most notably evinced in the detailed execution of the book are common sense and freedom from prepossession. I hope there is no danger of such a verdict seeming unenthusiastic; no one will deny that they are qualities that scholarship does not necessarily bring with it. (See, for instance, Professor Thomson's *Oresteia*, vol. I, p. 94, for a grim specimen of dramatic criticism by Wilamowitz). If anything, Mr. Kitto errs through pushing too far the determination to enter into the particular purpose of each play, so that he sometimes seems to be taking the will for the deed. Naturally this is noticeable chiefly in the treatment of Euripides. But I think even the slightly disconcerting note on p. 205, with its concluding statement that 'the critic's mere approval and disapproval is not a matter of public interest, is on reflection acceptable. There is at least a provisional distinction to be drawn between understanding the poet's intention and the

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final appraisal, and the latter cannot be complete where the nature of the criticism undertaken precludes detailed analysis of the verse. This has its bearing also on the remark that the ' fascinating but difficult question of his (Sophocles') poetic style must be passed over as lying outside the scope of this book,' for the book does in fact demonstrate the possibility of profitable, though incomplete, discussion at a more general level. But I admit that some may find Mr. Kitto a little too schematic at times.

I hope some of the merits of the book will come out in a rapid survey. The opening chapter on the *Supplices* as an example of lyrical tragedy seems to me to be specially happy as an example of the flexibility of Mr. Kitto's critical approach and in particular of his freedom from the temptation to look for the primitive and undeveloped where it is not to be found. It will be best to collect here a number of his contentions about Aeschylus, ignoring the distinctions between the different plays, important as they are. One main point is well summarized in the recurring description of dramatic movement in Aeschylus as vertical rather than longitudinal (pp. 38, 97). The characteristic he is pointing to is obviously a genuine one, and round it he builds a reply to the charge that Aeschylus's construction is undramatic, or primitive. He connects it with the use of the chorus, the nature of the tragic hero in Aeschylus, and the dramatic use of the past. That is to say he brings into relation various elements in Aeschylus's technique and displays them as part of a single dramatic purpose. It is impossible to summarize the discussion satisfactorily, but the *Agamemnon* will serve as an example. The action develops ' vertically ' in that increase of tension and deepening of atmosphere is more important than progress of the plot ; the chorus is plainly used to further this—the great first ode is, as Mr. Kitto says, ' not a prelude to action ; it is action.' And such a treatment fits a tragic hero whose character is not complex as in Sophocles, but, in Mr. Kitto's phrase, ' catastrophic '—there is no occasion to bring out his character in action, only to illuminate it from various angles ; while, again mediated by the chorus, the impression is created that ' the Past is an active factor in the Present.' It is the way in which these facts about the Aeschylean drama are interrelated and shown to bear on Aeschylus's ' tragic idea ' that makes Mr. Kitto's treatment impressive. Moreover the recognition of the reality of ' vertical '

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progress should prevent the application of irrelevant criteria. It is satisfactory to find insistence on a similar poetic method, directed against similarly irrelevant criticism, in Professor Tolkien's British Academy Lecture for 1936.[1] Neither Aeschylus nor the author of *Beowulf* is concerned to tell an exciting story. The *Supplices*, to take the simplest case, is like *Beowulf* ' simple and static ' in structure (Tolkien, p. 30). Moreover Mr. Kitto's chapter on the dramatic art of Aeschylus and Professor Tolkien's lecture illuminate each other with regard to the role of the saga element. The latter would, I am sure, welcome the remark by the former that 'Aeschylus appears to be taking advantage of the separate existence of saga in order to relieve his work of everything that is not specifically dramatic and tragic,' and would be able to apply it, *mutatis mutandis*, as indeed he in effect does.

One or two remarks may be made on the chapters on the *Oresteia*. Mr. Kitto is, I think, better on the *Choephori* than on the *Agamemnon*, and still better on the *Eumenides*. This is connected with the limitations inherent in the plan of the book, which is better adapted to the treatment of broad outlines than of detailed texture. Once he has pointed out the general nature of early tragedy —static and ' vertical ' in treatment—there is not very much more that can be done without close verbal analysis ; but the increasing importance of action in the ordinary sense within the *Oresteia*, till the *Eumenides* could at least be mistaken for a problem-play, makes a treatment concerned with structure and relatively detachable ' meaning ' more and more possible. As it progresses the *Oresteia* at once widens and narrows in its scope: widens in that from the individual tragedy of the house of Atreus we pass to a rendering of a stage in human evolution, the substitution of public justice for the blood-feud—narrows in that this specific theme takes the place of the more general, yet more concrete, presentation of sin and evil in the *Agamemnon* ; and this is appropriately accompanied by a less rich and suggestive use of imagery. (There is a brief sketch towards a treatment of the imagery in Professor Thomson's *Oresteia* vol. I, pp. 31-2). There is no lack of variety and strength in the imagery of the *Eumenides*, but it is much more tied down to the immediate occasion, so that—and this is the point for Mr.

[1] *Beowulf, the Monsters and the Critics*.

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Kitto's type of treatment—it is possible to leave the imagery out of account with less risk of impoverishment and distortion.

I must pass over the chapters on Sophocles, valuable as they are. On one minor point: I wonder whether Mr. Kitto (p. 161) does not underrate the relevance of the second ode in the *Antigone*. It illuminates from a new angle the conflict of social order and personal ties. Just because Creon is an inadequate representative of that order, it becomes proper to present its claims (not its claims on Antigone but its general importance) in the strongest possible way in order to heighten the significance of the contrast between public and private which Mr. Kitto himself refers to (p. 151). The ode is not perfunctorily ' attached ' to the action by the concluding lines as Masqueray suggests in his note on the passage ; on the contrary its whole force is thereby brought to bear on the action. It is inattention to the way the action is included in a wide social context that may have led Masqueray to his curious view that ' La tragédie se joue presque dans la région des idées pures.' Mr. Kitto is well worth consulting here for a corrective to this view which petrifies Antigone into a ' standard-bearer of the Unwritten Laws '—those laws which, Masqueray austerely remarks, ' élèvent cette vierge grecque au dessus de la mentailté des jeunes filles ordinaires.' Here as elsewhere Mr. Kitto steers a judicious course between ' classicizing ' and ' romanticizing '—between making out Greek tragedy to be something too lofty and restrained for the modern reader (see especially pp. 180-1), and sentimentalizing it.

It is perhaps with Euripides that Mr. Kitto's methods are most fruitful, and certainly his common sense is there specially welcome, considering how productive of critical nonsense Euripides has been. What Mr. Kitto calls the ' schematic ' treatment of his theme by Euripides is shown to account for the ' bad ' plots and for the use of the prologue. Naturalistic treatment is not appropriate where the aim is to *illustrate* pervasive characters of the human situation, where, as he says of the *Hecuba* ' the play draws its unity and power not from the symbol but from the thing symbolized.' The *Hippolytus* is framed between a divine prologue and epilogue, and this gives to the two sections of the intervening plot a ' tragic ' if not a ' dramatic ' unity (p. 376). He is oddly reluctant to say in so many words that the kind of drama that

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results suffers from this duplicity, but he implies that such a criticism would be in place when he notes by contrast the pre-eminence of the *Bacchæ* where the drama no longer has to exist on two planes, and ' the tragic theme can be entirely projected into the action ' (p. 384). His plan again precludes analysis of style, but his incidental remarks are suggestive. It is noticeable that simply from the accounts he gives of the structure of the plays, it would not be possible confidently to differentiate them from either *drame à thèse* or vaguely cosmic emotionalism. Of course he means us to read the plays and see for ourselves, but what I have said perhaps brings home the peculiar importance of the texture of writing in Euripides, paradoxically just *because* the writing is not absolutely of a piece with the theme. Euripides' verse does in fact strike a very delicate balance between the prosaic and the sentimental (the two extremes that would have relegated the plays to one or other of the two categories mentioned above). It is, as Mr. Kitto well puts it, ' thin ' in texture, and this is necessary for his purpose of ' handing out his drama in large pieces, easily to be grasped, while Sophocles demands every moment all the percipience we can muster ' (p. 274). Another word one might apply is ' neutral,' and just because of this neutrality, it is peculiarly easy to distort in translation. It is for this reason that it was for instance worth while for Mr. Eliot to point out the falsification of Euripides in Murray's translation. Aeschylus and Sophocles of course are immensely impoverished in translation, but the main lines remain. A play of Euripides can be distorted into something completely different. A good example of the effect of this is to be seen in Murray's treatment of the *Electra* (introduction to his translation ; also *Euripides and his Age*). When one compares it with Mr. Kitto's admirable account of the play, it is clear that they are literally not discussing the same play, and I do not think it is a cheap sneer to say that whereas Mr. Kitto's account is valid for Euripides, Murray's is so only for his own translation.

The treatment of what are distinguished as Euripides' ' tragi-comedies ' and his ' melodramas ' I have only been able to check for two of the latter, *Electra* and *Orestes*—but this seems to me one of the best parts of the book, and the classification itself a sound and suggestive one. Mr. Kitto's robust common sense strikes one especially by contrast with the discussions of Murray just

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referred to, which treat the realism of the *Electra* as a tragic realism.[2]

It will be clear that my selection of points for comment has been very random and personal, but at least I hope I have given some evidence to show that Mr. Kitto has made a remarkably interesting and comprehensive contribution to the criticism of Greek tragedy, and one that without being merely fashionable obviously belongs to the present day.

J. C. MAXWELL.

REMY DE GOURMONT — PRECURSOR

REMY DE GOURMONT—ESSAI DE BIOGRAPHIE INTELLECTUELLE, by Garnet Rees (Bavin et Cie, Paris).

The book on Gourmont one would like most to see would be written by someone old enough to have been influenced by him. As a research subject (from a British university) his importance is obscured by the amount of writing which has to be noticed. Dr. Rees, who is thorough, has to admit ' qu'on ne peut facilement saisir le principe directeur de son œuvre.' By the two hundred and seventieth page the ' principes ' have not clearly emerged from Dr. Rees's quotations, and the mere listing of Gourmont's critical theories without much decisive comment, only spreads the blanket of vagueness under which Dr. Rees has laid MM. T. S. Eliot (' le critique anglais qui a le mieux continué l'œuvre de Gourmont ') Ezra Pound, Aldous Huxley, Richard Aldington and ' le grand critique anglais M. Arthur Symons.' Gourmont is tucked in. Mr. Middleton Murry's important *The Problem of Style*, which derives as much from Gourmont as from Wordsworth's Preface, is not even noticed, although it would have suggested criticism of several of Gourmont's theories: for instance, of what Mr. Murry calls ' the pictorial heresy ' (' La faculté maîtresse du style, c'est donc la

[2]Perhaps it tells against my suggestion about Euripides that Murray's references to the *Electra* of Sophocles seem even more perverse.

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mémoire visuelle '), and of ' symbol.' Dr. Rees is not at all certain of the value or significance of the ' symbolist movement ' either in French or English. His account is so appreciative and impersonal that he can be said to have confined himself to linking up quotations ; with such comments as ' Dans un art synthétique (le symbolisme) à un tel point, chaque mot doit jouer un rôle bien précis et le langage doit traduire par sa musique autant que par son sens, l'idée exacte du poète.'

The best of Gourmont's ideas have been so completely assimilated by later critics that one reads him for the first time either with surprise or disappointment. *La Culture des Idées*, *Le Chemin de Velours*, and *Le Problème du Style* were written between 1900 and 1902, about twenty years before *The Sacred Wood* and *The Problem of Style*. Particularly memorable are the discussions of decadence, of cliché, of imitation, of metaphor, of realism, of plagiarism, pastiche and sentimentality, which are still lively and more useful than much that has been written, with more show of science, since. Gourmont too had his science. The ' cellules nerveuses ' were his most constant ' illusions of fact ' to which Mr. Eliot refers. The science is not pretentious so much as dogmatic, the dogmatic guesswork of an amateur, frequently impudent. To odds and ends of information from physiology and biology Gourmont put the same use as Lawrence, with more impudence and less relevance. The simple and comic parallels of Fabre's *Insect Life* excited in him the cynicism of a dilettante. ' Du nouveau, encore du nouveau, toujours du nouveau : voilà le premier principe de l'art.' Dr. Rees leaves unexamined the abstractions in which Gourmont saw the only alternatives to Belief—such as Novelty, Beauty, Strength, Intelligence, and devotes space to Gourmont as a philosopher. It is only by a loose application of terms that the title can be extended to him. Gourmont was much more intelligent than Anatole France, but like him ' il n'avait pas de système.' The dissociation of ideas is hardly this, but rather an essayist's formula. His culture of ideas and his scepticism are less important than his reliance on sensibility, on ' sensations,' which kept him out of Aesthetics and gave him his wide range.

Much more could have been made of the *Promenades Littéraires* which illustrate Gourmont's procedure. To call it a method would be misleading as Gourmont seems to have disdained

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any show of practical criticism and comparison of authors. He represents good taste, rather than practice. His opinions are always suggestive, but cannot be imitated. His indifference to practice meant that his criticism was general and frequently lacked exactness. He did not care to ' understand minutely.' Contrast, for instance, his interest in Flaubert with Lawrence's. Flaubert is an excuse for considerations on the ideal artist and ' le but de l'activité propre d'un homme.' Gourmont's concern with Beauty, Symbols, and the impermanence of feelings, should all have been considered together against his ' ériger en lois ' axiom in the *Lettres à L'Amazone*.

When Gourmont's subject is poetry or art in general, his ideas and the way he expresses them are more delicate and more final than anything in Matthew Arnold. For example: ' . . . Cependant, le vulgaire ressentira plus d'émotion devant la phrase banale que devant la phrase originale ; et ce sera la contre-épreuve ; au lecteur qui tire son émotion de la substance même de sa lecture s'oppose le lecteur qui ne sent sa lecture qu'autant qu'il peut en faire une application à sa propre vie, à ses chagrins, a ses espérances.'

But he is inconstant and repetitive, and is distracted by points of philology or other miscellaneous knowledge. Dr. Rees writes ' Le pouvoir de généraliser semble manquer aux essayistes anglais: ils n'ont pas de facilité pour jouer avec les idées comme des prestidigitateurs.' Pre-eminently Gourmont displays this facility, a facility in being so excited by an idea or theory, becoming so completely a champion, a rebel or whatever else that reality is lost and ideas become fantasy. As in his novels and poetry, Gourmont's tendency in criticism is to substitute fantasy for experience and thought. The distinction between fact and fiction, which Eliot desires, is slurred over. The critic becomes an exhibitor of fantasy and a public character. It is here that Gourmont suffers in comparison, again, with Arnold. The Frenchman appears, in his brilliance, less experienced, less fastidious, less wise.

G. D. KLINGOPULOS.

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FOLK-SONG IN ITS CULTURAL SETTING

THE BLUE GROVE: THE POETRY OF THE URAONS, by W. G. Archer, with a Foreword by Arthur Waley (Allen and Unwin, 1940, 8/6).

The Blue Grove is one of those books that testify to a genuine advance, in one direction at least, in the standards that govern publishing and reading. Though not offered primarily to scientific anthopologists, it does not hesitate to give its readers the full documentation and the cautiousness of commentary that betoken the scientific attitude. Not many years ago a translator of Mr. Archer's liveness of interest and taste would have introduced the poetry of the Uraons to the English reading public by a slim selection of the most ' effective ' poems and a brief sketch of the culture which would have allowed us to idealize it as we liked. Such a book would have been more superficially readable than this and much less worth reading.

The Uraons are one of the simpler peoples of Central India, living by agriculture. One section of *The Blue Grove* consists in the words of the songs sung in the paddy fields while the transplantation of the seedlings goes on. The singing is associated with this process rather than ploughing and reaping because this is the only agricultural operation done by large groups of villagers together, and singing for the Uraons is pre-eminently communal. Their strongly developed sense of community finds another expression in the nightly group dancing, joined in by all the younger people in the village, which is their main recreation and seems to be one of the chief necessities for their psychological well-being. A large section of the book, therefore, gives the words of the songs which are fitted to the drum rhythms of the dances. In line with their strong sense of community, and associated with the low age of marriage (usually between sixteen and twenty), is the Uraons' view of marriage as primarily an undertaking between families and an assimilation of the bride into the bridegroom's family. Our view of marriage as an alliance between two individuals who form a new social unit is not found. Nor are sexual interests at all prominent, in either the dance songs or the marriage songs.

As one might expect from such a public way of life, the poems

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that the group produces have no separate existence for the Uraon apart from the occasion with which they are fused: 'a dance poem and a marriage poem are as much the equipment of an Uraon as his axe and his plough. He would as little dream of going to a wedding or a dance and not using them or of using them apart from their contexts as he would of going to plough without his bullocks or of taking his plough with him for fishing.' For this reason Mr. Archer accompanies the poems with sufficient account of Uraon culture and of the social occasion of the poems to give them their setting. Although his interest focuses on the words he never forgets that the words are only one aspect of a wider social activity. Indeed the nature of much of the poetry makes it essential to know the background. The following, for instance, illustrates Mr. Archer's method and the necessity for it:

> 'Get up, boy, get up
> Release the brown cattle
> Wait, mother; let the peacocks cry
> Let the cock crow
> Let the dew fall
> And then I will loose the cattle.
>
> In this poem the peacocks, the cock and the dew are symbols of marriage pomp—the decorations in the house prior to the wedding. "Releasing the cattle" means here as in the preceding poem the sending of the girl's party to meet the party of the bridegroom . . .'

Here, as in many—perhaps most—of the poems, the similes and metaphors are not completed, the symbolism is left latent. In some, there is a slightly more explicit announcement of the theme:

> 'Wood, you are cutting wood, mother
> But the shoots will not spring again
> Will never spring again
> My mind is dying in the rocky uplands
> Never will the shoots spring again.
>
> Marriage means the cutting of the girl's connection with her parents, a severance of the affections which will not shoot again.'

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And in some poems, as Mr. Archer points out, a fully stated simile gives the clue to the method which others follow implicitly:

> ' The fawns frolic in the ploughed fields
> No. It is not the *sambar*. It is not the barking deer.
> It is the girl selected by the father
> The bride chosen by the mother.'

The simple rhythms and unaffected language of the translations make them pleasant to read ; they are in good English, but English with a slightly unusual tang which suggests close faith to the originals. Although the poetry is Mr. Archer's chief, it is by no means his exclusive, interest, and the general view of Uraon culture which *The Blue Grove* presents is in many ways as interesting as the poems themselves. Perhaps the work can best be regarded as anthropology of a valuable type which is becoming a little less rare than it has been. The professional anthropologist tends to be aloof, valuing almost exclusively the exactness of his picture and taking little account of the intrinsic worth of the cultural products that he describes. At the other extreme there have been more than enough writers and travellers entranced by some aspect of a primitive culture and enthusiastically publicizing an idealized version of it ; the culture is merely the stimulus for their own creative effort. Between these extremes there is a possible line of advance of the greatest importance, which one or two books have followed. In these the observations are scientific in the sense of being full and exact, even at the cost of making the book less obviously palatable. But they differ from most scientific anthropology in giving lavish and sensitive study to aspects of culture which have high intrinsic value for us as well as for the peoples concerned. One of the finest of such books recently published was *Dance and Drama in Bali* by Beryl de Zoete and Walter Spies. And *The Blue Grove*, though a slighter work, is in the same line of advance.

D.W.H.

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